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The history of the origin
and first ten years of the

THE

HISTORY

OF THE

ORIGIN

AND

FIRST TEN YEARS

OF THE

British and Foreign

BIBLE SOCIETY.

BY THE

REV. JOHN OWEN, A.M.

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RECTOR OF PAGLESHAM, ESSEX,
AND
ONE OF THE SECRETARIES TO THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

VOL. I.

"And I saw another Angel fly in the midst of Heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to EVERY NATION, AND KINDRED, AND TONGUE, AND PEOPLE." Rev. xiv. 6.

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1816.

TO

The Right Honorable

JOHN,

LORD TEIGNMOUTH,

PRESIDENT

OF THE

BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY,

&c. &c.

MY LORD,

IN dedicating to your Lordship the following work, I have no ambition, either to bespeak patronage, or to offer praise. My object is, simply to testify the sense I entertain of your Lordship's invaluable services to the

Institution of which it treats, and to express, at the same time, the high degree of respect and attachment with which

I have the honor to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Faithful Servant,

JOHN OWEN.

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

PREFACE.

NEARLY two years have elapsed since the author, influenced by the earnest and re-iterated solicitations of many respectable individuals, engaged to prepare a "History of the origin, progress, and actual state of the British and Foreign Bible Society." It having been recommended that the work should be printed by subscription, proposals to that effect were drawn up and issued accordingly.

The plan was no sooner made known, than

it met with the warmest encouragement. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Bishop of Durham, honored it with their prompt and munificent patronage, and the example which they set was very generously and extensively followed.

Of the illustrious individuals whose names have been mentioned, as well as of the subscribers at large, the author has to request, that they will accept this public expression of his gratitude. To Sir Digby Mackworth, and Mr. Phillips* (and more especially to the latter)

* In referring to Mr. Phillips, a member of the "Society of Friends," the author has a pleasure in acknowledging the great kindness which he has experienced from numerous individuals connected with that body of Christians. To one above the rest—by whose sudden and lamented removal the British and Foreign Bible Society was deprived of "one of its earliest members, its brightest ornaments, and its most useful conductors,"*—he is indebted for testimonies of friendship, which make the name of Wilson Birkbeck a subject of his most grateful and affectionate remembrance.

* Author's speech at the formation of the Southwark Auxiliary Bible Society.

the author feels an obligation for their liberal and persevering co-operation, which he is as little able to describe as to repay. To these acknowledgments (which might easily be multiplied) the author desires to add his thanks to Messrs. Hatchard, Seeley, and Arch, for their disinterested services in promoting subscriptions; and to his colleague and friend Mr. Hughes, for his obliging assistance in the correction of the press.

Having disposed of what seemed first to require his attention, the author will now proceed to such observations as relate more immediately to the performance of his task.

The design which he proposed to himself, in writing the History of the British and Foreign Bible Society, having been, to exhibit a faithful and perspicuous account of its origin, and its principal transactions, the author considered it his duty to adopt such a method, as, whatever recommendations it might otherwise want, should appear best adapted to the accomplishment of

that end. The simplicity of the Society's object, and the uniformity of its operations, discouraged every attempt at ingenious and artificial distribution. To do justice to the subject, it seemed necessary that the facts should be stated, as nearly, as possible, in the order in which they occurred; and that such connection should be preserved among them, as might show their mutual relation to each other, and their derivation from the same common original. For this purpose, the course suggested by the Society's Annual Reports, appeared that which, on the whole, it would be expedient to prefer; inasmuch as, while it conducts the reader through the several transactions both domestic and foreign, it reminds him periodically of the degree in which they combine to manifest the growth, and to extend the usefulness, of the Parent Institution.

Adopting, therefore, this principle as the basis of his plan, the author selected from the Society's printed Reports, and unpublished records; from the different publications of Auxiliary So-

cieties and individuals;* and from such papers, whether private or official, as were in his possession, or came within his reach, whatever could throw light upon the facts which it would be his business to record. At the same time, with a view to relieve, in some measure, the monotony of annual detail, he cast the decad into

* Among the publications conveying useful information relative to the Society may be specified,

Reports of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

Summary.

Brief View.

Compendium.

Reports of Auxiliary Bible Societies; particularly of those established in Scotland.

To which may be added, of a more general nature—

Scott's Sermon on the Bible Society, (first printed in 1811.)

Short History of the Bible Society.

A Narrative of the principal Proceedings of the British and Foreign Bible Society, by the Rev. W. Napper, (of New Ross.)

Address, explanatory of the Principles, Views, and Exertions of the British and Foreign Bible Society, by the Stirlingshire Auxiliary Bible Society.

The Formation, Progress, and Effects, of Bible Associations, as detailed by the Committee of the Southwark Auxiliary Bible Society, in their Second Report and Appendix.

Historical Sketch of the Translation and Circulation of the Scriptures, from the earliest Period to the present Time, by the Rev. Messrs. Thomson and Orme.

Chalmers on the Influence of Bible Societies.

The Religious Periodical Publications generally; but more particularly the Christian Observer.

three general parts, agreeably to certain epochs, very distinctly observable in this portion of the Society's History; and gave to the years which fell within them respectively, the form and denomination of chapters.

Of the manner in which the plan has been executed, the author may be permitted, in general, to say, that he has done the best which his peculiar circumstances would allow. The variety and urgency of his official duties in the Society, added to the concerns of a numerous family, and the interruptions of frequent indisposition, rendered his task not a little onerous, and will, he trusts, be accepted as some apology for the delay and the imperfection with which it has been performed.

On one or two points the author thinks it expedient to offer a more particular explanation.

He is aware that an objection may be brought against certain parts of his narrative, as scrupulously, and even unnecessarily minute. Against the force of this objection, he

has to plead, that, from the knowledge which he possessed of the disposition of many of the Society's friends, and the conduct of most of its enemies, he considered such minuteness indispensable to the satisfaction of the one, and the confutation of the other. By the former, indeed, he expects to be oftener charged with omissions than redundancies; and, with regard to the latter, he is persuaded, that their misrepresentations could not in any other way have been so completely and effectually exposed. "Those who have been members of the Society from the time of its original institution, will, doubtless, recollect, with how much jealousy our proceedings were observed; how severely every warm expression, and every vigorous measure, was criticised, by that little party, which has, from the beginning, railed at the progress which it could not impede."* To those who enter into the spirit of this remark, an attention to *minuteness* will not appear to require any further justification.

* Speech of the Rev. Reginald Heber, at the Anniversary of the Shropshire Auxiliary Bible Society, (July 8, 1815.)

The author thinks it not impossible, that some of his readers may be of opinion, that he would have done better to have said less on the subject of the controversy, if not to have omitted it altogether. Concurring most heartily in the sentiments so admirably expressed by the "British Critic," in the following passage, he had sincerely to regret, that he was not at liberty to follow that writer's example:

"If authority could decide a question, perfectly cognizable by common sense, we should be inclined to bow to the authority which (very unhappily, we think) opposes itself to the Bible Society. Or, if acute and subtle argument could possibly make us believe white to be black, we should doubtless be staggered by the logic which has (with equal unhappiness) been wasted on this subject. But, as it is, we can only lament, and deeply lament, that invincible propensity to take different sides on every question, which breaks out even in the clearest and plainest concerns of human life.

" If it be a clear point, that Bibles and Testaments, un-sophisticated and un-commented, cannot possibly do harm—

" If it be clear that such a gift cannot be vitiated by the giver—

" If it be certain, that a Society selling cheap Bibles and Testaments, and also other excellent works on theology, cannot possibly be hurt by having a great part of its expense voluntarily borne by another Society,—it is, and must be, clear to us,

" 1. That the Bible Society is a good thing.

" 2. That it tends to assist, rather than to injure, the excellent Society for *Promoting Christian Knowledge.*

" Ten thousand volumes of controversy cannot, in our opinion, invalidate these plain truths, and therefore of such volumes we take no no-

tice, that we may not perplex our readers and ourselves in vain."*

The historian of the British and Foreign Bible Society is placed in very different circumstances, and it becomes his duty to act accordingly. He finds the controversy almost co-eval with the Institution itself; and can scarcely advance through a single stage of its history, without discovering the opponent, under one form or other, watching its steps, and plotting its destruction. The means he perceives, indeed, to have been varied, but the end uniformly the same. "*Delenda est*" has been inscribed on the banners of every assailant who has taken the field against the Society; and the object of each, and of all, has been, not merely to contract the dimensions of the edifice, but to "cause the work to cease." In a case, therefore, of this description, wherein he who "wrought in the work with one of his hands," has been compelled "with the other to

* British Critic, March, 1813, pp. 309, 310. See Note on p. 308 of this Volume.

hold a weapon,"* the operations of labor and of conflict, of building and defending, have become so closely associated, that they cannot be consistently separated the one from the other.

But while the author contends for the propriety of noticing the controversy as matter of historical record, he deprecates most seriously (except on very rare and extraordinary occasions) the choice of it as a theme for commemorative and popular addresses. Occasions, he admits, will arise, in which, for the vindication of character, or the just defence of the cause, it may be necessary to discuss such objections, as, either by their own subtilty, or by the authority of the objectors, have acquired a serious consideration. This, however, should be done, when it is done at all, in an argumentative and dispassionate manner: without any of those stimulating appeals to the angry feelings, which minister to strife

* Nehemiah, iv. 17, 18.

and vain glory, and prove injurious to the interests of charity and peace.*

It were much to be desired, that in Anniversary Meetings, in general, controversial topics should be wholly avoided, as alien from the nature of such commemorations, and adverse to the purposes for which they are held.

The observations of the Oxford Committee, at the first Anniversary of that Institution, place this subject in so judicious a light, that they deserve the serious consideration of Auxiliary Societies in every part of the empire.

"At a period when the British and Foreign Bible Society has not merely survived the perils which threatened its infant growth, but has struck

* For an admirable specimen of an Address, wherein objections from a high ecclesiastical quarter were refuted with firmness, perspicuity, and moderation, see the speech of Archdeacon Corbett, President of the Shropshire Auxiliary Bible Society, at the Anniversary before referred to.

root so deep, and thrown out such vigorous shoots, that it might defy the tempest, from whatever quarter it should blow, it is hoped that no discordant voice may here be heard, that no feeling may ever be suffered to intrude into such an assembly as the present, which will not completely harmonize with its present object,—the diffusion of that heavenly wisdom, pure and peaceable, which brings into subjection every proud and uncharitable thought. They think it more becoming, as unquestionably it is far more agreeable, where we behold none but friends and supporters, to expatiate on the rapid and triumphant progress of our cause, and record the yearly accession of towns and counties, yea even of independent kingdoms, to this pious and benevolent confederacy of nations, for promoting the instruction and happiness of all mankind."*

So far is the author from designing, by any thing contained in the ensuing narrative, to widen the breach so unhappily made between

* First Report of the Oxford Auxiliary Bible Society.

parties who ought never to have been put asunder, that he would gladly make any sacrifice, consistent with duty and conscience, by which he might hope to prove instrumental in healing it. With Archdeacon Daubeny, (with whom he is glad to find an opportunity of agreeing,) he would say:

"The advocates for the new Bible Society, and the members of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, have both professedly the same object in view; namely, the dissemination of the Gospel. The only difference between them, appears to be a difference of opinion with respect to the *mode* by which this desirable object may be most effectually accomplished. *What cause then, among Christians, for uncharitable judgment on either side.*"*

In fact, the history of every controversy is but a development of human infirmity; and in few controversies has this infirmity been more unhappily manifested, than in that of which so

* Charge for 1812.

much will unavoidably appear in the pages of this work. The first wish of the author is, that it were possible, to consign the controversy to oblivion; but as that cannot be, his next wish is, that from the memorial which must be preserved of it, both himself and others may learn a useful lesson of forbearance, moderation, and peace.

"Happy will it be" (to use the words of the venerable Dean of Carlisle) "for the honor of the cause of God, happy for the credit of the religion of His Son, if both parties should learn to improve in Christian charity and moderation: if, on the one hand, the advocates of the Bible Society should learn to bear their successes with a grateful tranquillity and decorum; and, on the other, their adversaries should set an impressive example of a pacific disposition, and of Christian good-will!"*

In taking leave of the reader, the author has only to observe, that, though he felt reluctant to break off his narrative at the close of the tenth

* Strictures on Dr. Marsh, &c. p. 398.

year, he has, in completing the first decad, done every thing which he had promised, and as much as he could perform. Whether he may be induced to advance any further, will depend upon the reception given to these volumes, and his future health and avocations. In the mean time, he commends what he has written to the candor of the public, and to the countenance of Him, without whose blessing the "best intentions and most persevering exertions to promote even his glory, would be of no avail."*

* Seventh Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

February 16, 1816.

THE

HISTORY

OF THE

BRITISH AND FOREIGN

BIBLE SOCIETY.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

NOTHING is more natural than a desire to investigate the rise, and ascertain the progress, of whatever has acquired sufficient importance to excite our astonishment, or command our admiration. We feel a sort of instinctive curiosity to know the source from which the instrument of our gratification has been derived; and expect to find our pleasure increase, in proportion as we discover, by what means it has been brought from its simplest elements and its smallest

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dimensions, to its actual state of symmetry and grandeur.

If it might have been presumed that one object should have awakened a curiosity of this description, rather than another, that object would have been the British and Foreign Bible Society. Such in fact has been the case: and so numerous and importunate have been the inquiries into the manner of its production, both abroad and at home, that it seems expedient no longer either to refuse, or delay the desired satisfaction.

Under this impression, the author proposes to introduce his History of the Transactions of the Institution, by drawing aside the veil which has hitherto concealed the circumstances of its origin; and tracing, as distinctly as he may be able, the gradation of causes, by which it attained that maturity, which qualified it for extensive and efficient application. In performing this task, he will cherish a hope, that he may be doing something towards illustrating the ways of HIM, "whose never-failing Providence ordereth all things both in heaven and in earth," and who ALONE is "wonderful in counsel and excellent in working."

The primary occasion of all those measures, out of which grew the institution of the British and Foreign Bible Society, was THE SCARCITY OF WELSH BIBLES in the Principality, and the impracticability of obtaining adequate supplies

from the only source existing at that period, whence copies of the authorized version were to be derived—THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

So early as the year 1787, this scarcity had been discovered in some districts of the Principality; and induced applications for relief, on the part of those under whose observation it had more particularly fallen, and whose compassion it had very naturally excited. To what difficulties and discouragements these applications were subjected, may be readily inferred from the manner in which the subject is treated by a Clergyman in London; who, on the 15th of May 1787, thus addresses a Brother Clergyman in Wales.

"In consequence of what you wrote concerning *the scarcity of Bibles*, I have received twenty-five from the Society for distributing Bibles among the soldiers and sailors,* &c. Besides this, I am collecting money to send you some more, which I buy of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; *who alone in London have got any Welsh Bibles: the other Society having had theirs from them.*"

Nearly a year had expired, before the writer of this letter was able to announce to his impatient correspondent the success of his project;

* Now denominated "The Naval and Military Bible Society."

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and then he was compelled to do so in terms which greatly diminished the value of the intelligence.

"I have delayed" (says this London Clergyman) "so long to write, in hopes of sending you some good tidings about the Welsh Bibles; but *alas! I have only waited for a disappointment.* There was a prospect of obtaining, through the assistance of another Society, and with the help of Mr. T.'s purse, no less a number than 1000; but *the Society* (viz. the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge) *refuses to part with more than* 500, and those at a price which altogether makes *5s. 6d.* each. *This has entirely defeated the design*, as far as I am concerned in it."

In the course of the next two or three years, this scarcity, which, from the scantiness of supplies either directly or circuitously transmitted, would naturally have increased, began to manifest itself by stronger symptoms and louder complaints. Among others, a Clergyman, on his return from visiting the Principality, of which he was a native, in the month of November 1791, thus piously and energetically expresses his sentiments, in reference to this subject.

"Being fully convinced, that every Christian ought to be diligent, and do all he can, to serve his God and his generation, before he falls asleep, I have been lately planning and laying a foundation for a great work. When I was in Wales

last, I heard *great complaining amongst the poor, for want of Bibles; and that there were none to be had for money.* I have thought much of the matter of late, and it has impressed me much: for, is there poverty like unto their poverty, who have not the Bible of God? I have taken some steps towards procuring a cheap edition of Welsh Bibles, to be sold at a reduced price. But my plan thus far is rather immature, and in no great degree of forwardness. But, with God's help, which I earnestly intreat, I resolve to go on. I wish to hear from you, what size Bible would the generality of the people wish to purchase, and what number will be wanted; and every other information which you can furnish me with, will be thankfully received."

In consequence of the resolution taken by this benevolent and patriotic Clergyman, a series of efforts, both insulated and combined, took place, in order to induce the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, (the only public body competent to such a work,) to undertake a new impression of Welsh Bibles.

The nature of these efforts, the earnestness with which they were pursued, and the disappointment in which they expired, may be distinctly collected from the Extracts of Correspondence on the subject, which appear in the Appendix* to the Rev. Mr. Dealtry's Vindication of the British and

* P. 63. Second Edition.

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Foreign Bible Society. Having carefully examined the originals from which those Extracts were made, the author can with conscientious satisfaction refer to them, as containing a faithful representation of the vicissitudes which attended this strenuous, but abortive attempt, to obtain means of supplying the poor of the Principality with the word of God in their own language. As it would be charging these pages unnecessarily, to transcribe what is already in the hands of the public, the author will satisfy himself, after this general reference to Mr. Dealtry's Appendix, with exhibiting only such passages from the Letters which it contains, and from others now before him, as may appear necessary to establish his general assertion, respecting the scarcity of Welsh Bibles, and the difficulty of procuring a supply.

Adverting to his plan for a new "edition of the Welsh Bible," the Clergyman before quoted proposes to his correspondent, (in a letter of December 27, 1791,) that the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge should be solicited to publish 10,000 Bibles; with an engagement on the part of the applicants, "to take and pay for 5000, as soon as they were printed." "Would not this" (says the writer) "be a step that would weigh with them, and an *inducement* to undertake the work? I would undertake to procure one half of the money necessary for that purpose, till

the Bibles were sold: and *that number would soon go off*. And should the Society refuse to assist, (which I hardly think they will,) I think it is clearly our duty to proceed, and trust kind Providence, and not consult flesh and blood, &c. Furnish me with every particular direction you can think of: then I shall make a trial of the Society."

Previously to the proposed trial being made, the individual through whom the application to the Society was to be presented, thought it expedient to require " a long list of names, as a satisfactory proof, that Welsh Bibles were much wanted; *which the Society seemed to doubt*." Advice was therefore given by the principal agent in this business to his correspondent in Wales, " to lose no time in procuring as long a list of names as he could;" with the addition at the same time of this observation:—" yet even now, I expect we must stand to our former engagement; that is to say, *to pay down for four thousand*."

Very shortly after, (viz. on the 10th of May 1792,) this writer informs his correspondent, that he had done what the Society requested him, viz. given them security for 4000 copies as soon as published; and on the 17th of July, that " the Society had accepted of his proposal respecting a new edition of the Welsh Bible, and would undertake the work. But he accompanies this latter statement with an intimation, that the movements of the Society were painfully slow,

and not to be accelerated. This complaint is repeated in still stronger terms, and with much evident dejection, by another correspondent; who, in a letter from London, dated October 29, 1792, thus expresses his feelings: "I am sorry the Society is so dilatory, indecisive, and reluctant; but trust, that the Lord, who hath put it into the hearts of so many in Wales to love His holy word, will also put it into the hearts of some of their more wealthy brethren in England to use effective methods of supplying them with Bibles."

At length, in the month of April 1793, the individual through whom the negociation with the Society was conducted, gave such a representation of the existing difficulties, arising from the disbelief of the Society, that "a large number of Bibles could be got off;" its disinclination to incur the great expense which an edition of the Welsh Bible would cost;* and the impracticability, from "the badness of the times, of undertaking the work by private subscription;"—that the original projector of the edition was compelled to inform his correspondent, that, "if a considerable number of subscribers cannot be obtained, *the business must be given up.*" The idea of procuring such a number of subscribers was, it must be supposed, considered

* "Being, as they reasoned, from 1,500*l.* to 2,000*l.* without reimbursement, that is, the defect between the prime cost, and the sale, including the binding."

impracticable: for the same writer, after a lapse of a year, thus addresses his correspondent: "Have you altogether dropped your former intention of having a new edition of Welsh Bibles? It is clear that the times are rather unfavorable for any undertaking, where great sums of money will be required. I can only say, that I am ready to assist, as far as I can, if any attempt is made in this business."

From the tenor of this passage, and the termination of the correspondence, there is reason to conclude, that the obstacles to "a new edition of Welsh Bibles" were deemed insurmountable; and that "the intention of having" such an edition was consequently "dropped," and "the business given up."

Such was the unhappy issue of the first attempt to obtain a supply of Welsh Bibles for the poor of the Principality. Every step appears to have been taken by those who interested themselves in the business, to bring it to a successful conclusion: but without effect. They had not *themselves* the means of providing a remedy for the evil of which they complained; and they could not offer a sufficient inducement to *those* who alone were competent to provide it.

A considerable interval was suffered to take place, during which, as far as appears, no measures were adopted to satisfy those wants, which were only not urged, because they had already been so repeatedly urged in vain.

Impressed, however, as it is presumed, by recurring applications, with a sense of the necessity for some further exertions, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge determined, at length, to obey those calls for which, either from a disbelief of their reasonableness, or a doubt of its own ability to answer them, it had hitherto declined to make any provision. An order was accordingly passed at its Board, in 1796, for a new edition of the Welsh Bible, Common Prayer, and singing Psalms, to the amount of 10,000 copies, with 2000 extra Testaments; and in 1799, this order was executed.

With a liberality which deserves the warmest commendation, this venerable Society, when the impression was ready for delivery, gave notice, through a printed circular, that copies might be had "neatly bound in calf, by *any of the inhabitants of the Principality*, through the medium, and upon the application of any Member of the Society, at *one half of the prime cost in sheets*."

Thirty years had now elapsed since the last edition of the Welsh Bible was printed; and so greatly had the demands for the Holy Scriptures accumulated, during this long season of drought, that this impression, large as it was, and liberal as it might appear to the Society which had so generously provided it, was almost immediately absorbed; and considerable districts, in different parts of the Principality, particularly

in the counties of Montgomery, Cardigan, and Carmarthen, had to lament, that they could obtain no refreshment whatever from this most seasonable but partial irrigation. If, as has been credibly reported, the joy of those who received the Bibles amounted to exultation, the grief of those (and they were many) who could not obtain a copy, fell little short of anguish. Their "expressions of regret," says a beneficed Clergyman in Montgomeryshire, who had witnessed their disappointment, "were truly affecting."

But as this is an assertion which may seem to require proof, it will be proper to adduce a few authorities in support of it.

"The Welsh Bibles" (says one Clergyman) "are *all sold, every copy.* I applied, through the interest of a friend in London, for 300; but *too late:* the Bishop of St. Asaph applied the same day; but *in vain.*"

"The demand" (says a Clergyman in London) "has already *so far exceeded* the impression of 10,000 copies, that each person is *put off with fewer than he applied* for, and thought he had secured."

"Pray how are you off in North Wales" (writes a Clergyman in South Wales) "with respect to the last edition of the Welsh Bible? Out of 250 copies promised me, I received but 150; and ought to be exceedingly thankful even for that number: for I have been more successful

in my application than any of my neighbours hitherto. Not a single copy reached these parts, except fifty copies, (which) the Rev. Mr. W. received. I was under the necessity of laying aside the List of Subscribers, being more than 300 names, &c."

"The last Oxford edition" (writes a Clergyman in Cardiganshire) "was disposed of before I was informed of it. I applied to Dr. Gaskin for some quantity of Welsh Bibles: his answer was, that they were all gone; that there were only 10,000 printed, and that *twenty thousand would not answer half the demand.*"

And finally, a beneficed Clergyman in Montgomeryshire, makes the following statement; which has in part been quoted before.

"*A large district in this neighbourhood could not obtain one of* the late Oxford edition; and *the expressions of regret among the people on that account, were truly affecting.*"

From these testimonies, a judgment may be formed of the insufficiency of the edition of 1799, and of the defective manner in which it operated as a remedy for that scarcity which during ten years had been the subject of painful solicitude and ineffectual complaint.

Such being the state of things in the Principality in the year 1800, applications were now made from various quarters to the venerable Society before-mentioned, in order to ascertain whether

any further supplies might be expected. Some of these were addressed through channels of the first respectability, both Lay and Ecclesiastical;* and an expectation was entertained, that their influence would not be exerted in vain. But the result was the same in all cases. The Society had either done its utmost, or erroneously conceived, that it had done sufficient; and no encouragement was given to hope, that any thing more would be attempted.

For more than two years the disappointed candidates for Welsh Bibles, among whom were many diligent and laborious Parish Ministers, persevered in the mortifying business of importunate, but unavailing application. In the course of this time, that want which was at first considerable, had greatly increased;† and the progress which education was making, chiefly

* "I have done all I could" (writes the late Bishop of Peterborough,) "respecting the Welsh Bibles, and shall always be glad to forward what you wish. I wrote to Dr. Gaskin lately upon the subject; but whether I can be of any further service, I know not."

Referring to these words, the Clergyman to whom they were addressed observes: "I have written to my Bishop, and he to the Society; since then, I got a friend to call on Dr. Gaskin, to ask if they had any intention of publishing another edition:" the answer was: "No, we have not." This correspondence took place in June, 1800.

† The want in 1800, may be in some measure conceived, by an estimate made of the number, not which could be *gratuitously* disposed of, but *actually sold*. "In case," (says a

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through the medium of Sunday Schools, tended at once to augment the demand for Bibles, and to render the difficulty of procuring them a subject of deeper and more general regret.

At length, in the summer of 1802, all prospect of relief from the source so often referred to, being finally closed,* a project was conceived for accomplishing an object which seemed scarcely to admit of any further delay, by contracting with a well-qualified Printer for a competent impression of Welsh Bibles, and defraying the expense of a reduction of price, or, where necessary, a gratuitous distribution to the poor, by means of a private subscription.† Matters had arrived at

Clergyman, writing in July, 1800,) "the Society can be prevailed upon to undertake an edition some time hereafter; yet, so far as I can be able at this distance to judge, *an edition of three or four thousand might be sold before the Society's comes out.*"

* "We have long talked" (writes one of the Clergymen interested in this business) "about another edition of Welsh Bibles, which, I doubt not, is greatly wanted, in South Wales in particular. *I have repeatedly tried the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, through the medium of my friends, men of influence; and found, that no further help is to be expected from them now: they gave a decided answer more than twice over.*"

† This plan appears to have been designed by its projectors to have had a very liberal operation. The following sentiments, as expressive of their views, are worthy of admiration.

"But the grand difficulty is yet to come. Where can we find a sufficient number of men to distribute the Bibles with

this point, and the speculation described was undergoing discussion, when an occurrence took place, which changed the whole complexion of the business, and laid the foundation of a permanent supply of the Holy Scriptures, not only to the inhabitants of Wales, but to the whole human race.

In the month of December 1802, the Rev. Thomas Charles, B. A. of Bala, an ordained Minister of the Established Church, but officiating in connection with the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists, a man of zealous piety, and indefatigable exertion, and by his habit of itinerating, and promoting Sunday Schools, rendered intimately familiar with the wants of his countrymen, was in London; when he proposed a contribution, in aid of the plan for printing and distributing the Scriptures among them. On the 7th of that month, the subject having been introduced by Mr. Joseph Tarn, the present Assistant Secretary and Accountant to the British and Foreign Bible Society, in a circle of friends who had met to transact a

impartiality, in the fear of God? Every one has his relative, his favorite, his pious, kind neighbour; these must be favored at the expense of justice and mercy, against conscience and against duty. If this business is seriously taken in hand, the plan must be well matured, and *faithfully executed;* and we must try, *not to accommodate any particular sort, but all men that want Bibles, and upon the terms they can afford.*"

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different business,* Mr. Charles preferred his suit on behalf of his countrymen; describing the want of Welsh Bibles, and the failure of all attempts to obtain them in the usual channel, and urging with importunate earnestness the necessity of resorting in this painful extremity to "new and extraordinary means."†

This proposition gave rise to a conversation of some length; in the course of which, it was suggested, that, as Wales was not the only part of the kingdom in which such a want as had been described might be supposed to prevail,

* It is due to "The Religious Tract Society" to state, that the parties here alluded to, and to whom reference will hereafter be so frequently made, were the Committee of that very active and useful Institution.

† The names of Ambrose Martin, and Henry Boase, Esqrs. ought not to be suppressed. These two Gentlemen took a most lively and liberal interest in the object of Mr. Charles's application; and made very generous exertions in favor of it, previously to the formation of that Society, which rendered all further exertions of this description on the part of individuals unnecessary. In a letter of the latter gentleman, (dated August 12, 1803,) which now lies before me, there is so much to admire, that I trust I shall obtain his excuse for extracting a passage from it for the reader's satisfaction.

"From the time you first mentioned the want of a *new edition of the Sacred Scriptures in the Welsh language*, my thoughts have been much occupied by that important subject. I CANNOT WITHOUT PAIN REFLECT, THAT ANY PERSON IN THIS HIGHLY-FAVORED LAND SHOULD BE ABLE AND WILLING TO READ THE BIBLE, AND WANT THE MEANS OF SO DOING."

it would be desirable to take such steps as might be likely to stir up the public mind to a *general* dispersion of the Scriptures. To this suggestion, which proceeded from the Rev. Joseph Hughes, a Baptist Minister, one of the Society's present Secretaries, and which was warmly encouraged by the rest of the company, we are to trace the dawn of those measures, which, expanding with time, and progressive discussion, issued at length in the proposal and establishment of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

The propriety of exciting the attention of the public to the general dispersion of the Scriptures having been thus casually suggested, Mr. Hughes was desired to prepare, in writing, such an Address as might contain, in a more digested form, the substance of his unpremeditated observations; in order that the project, if it should, upon revision, appear practicable and important, might be regularly submitted to the consideration of the Public.

In the mean time, certain measures were pursued, which tended materially to advance the progress of the undertaking. A communication was made of the object contemplated, to some persons of distinguished reputation for piety and philanthropy. Among these, was William Wilberforce, Esq. who, at a private interview, conferred with the parties who had solicited his advice; and furnished such hints as his enlightened mind and

liberal heart would be likely to suggest, in order to improve their plan, and facilitate its introduction to public acceptance. A similar communication was made to Charles Grant, Esq. and attended with a similar result.

The Rev. C. F. A. Steinkopff, Minister of the German Lutheran Church in the Savoy, and one of the Society's present Secretaries, voluntarily tendered his services to promote the design, in the course of a journey which he was about to make to the Continent of Europe. His offer was thankfully accepted, and he was accordingly requested to inquire particularly into the want of the Scriptures in such places as he should have occasion to visit. Similar inquiries were directed to be promoted in Ireland, and in other parts of the United Kingdom; and the following queries relating to the same object, were addressed to the country at large, through the medium of certain Periodical Publications.

" 1. Can the poor in your neighbourhood generally read?

" 2. To what extent are they furnished with the Holy Scriptures?

" 3. Do they discover a solicitude to read them?

" 4. What has been done towards supplying this want?

" 5. Are there persons in your neighbourhood willing further to encourage the distribution of

the Holy Scriptures in our own and in foreign lands?*"

These transactions took place antecedently to the close of May, 1803; and in the course of that month, Mr. Hughes presented an impression of an Essay, prepared in compliance with the wishes expressed at the primary Meeting, under the title of "The Excellence of the Holy Scriptures an Argument for their more General Dispersion." In this Essay, which may be regarded as containing the rudiments of the future Society, the author expatiates on the transcendent excellence of the Holy Scriptures, enumerates the different Religious Societies more or less concerned in promoting their circulation, and describes the limitations of their respective constitutions, and their consequent inadequacy to the work of a general distribution. Mr. Hughes then represents the importance of an association of Christians at large, with a view exclusively to the circulation of the Holy Scriptures; and points out a variety of advantages both direct and collateral, which might be expected to result from the operations of such an Institution.

As the enumeration given by Mr. Hughes of the Religious Societies, exhibits a fair account of all the charitable sources at that time in existence, from which a distribution of the Scriptures might

* See Evang. Mag. and Christ. Obs. for June, 1803.

be expected, it seems, on every ground, expedient that the reader should see it.

" The many thousands of Bibles already circulated by various Societies, do them honor, and claim our fervent wishes for their lasting prosperity. Together with the Bible they circulate, for the most part, several volumes and tracts intended to familiarize, vindicate, and enforce the principles of the Bible; nor can it be doubted that, in this way, the cause in which they are embarked has been materially assisted. The chief of the Societies are included in the following list: the figures subjoined denote the year in which each was founded.

The Society for promoting Christian Knowledge 1698
The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts 1701
The Society in Scotland for propagating Christian Knowledge 1709
The Society for promoting Religious Knowledge among the Poor 1750
The Bible Society 1780
The Society for the Support and Encouragement of Sunday-Schools 1785

" The Society for promoting Christian Knowledge is composed of subscribing and corresponding members. The former hold regular meetings,

and transact the general business of the Society. The latter are such persons in Great Britain, Ireland, and other Protestant countries, as are chosen to correspond with the Society on the state of religion in their neighbourhoods, to suggest such methods of doing good as occur to them, to distribute Bibles and other books recommended by the Society, and to remit occasional or stated contributions. Under the patronage of this Society, Charity-Schools have been erected, Bibles, Prayer-Books, and Religious Tracts dispersed, and foreign Missions, particularly in the East Indies, supported. It has printed the New Testament in Arabic, the whole Bible in the language of the Isle of Man, and four editions of it in the Welsh language. All members of the Society are entitled to Bibles, Testaments, Prayer-Books, and the other publications of the Society, at the reduced prices mentioned in its annual catalogue.

"The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts appears to have grown out of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, which refers to it, we believe, in all its annual accounts. The object of this Society is limited by charter to Foreign Parts, and more especially to the Plantations, Colonies, and Factories, beyond Seas, belonging to the Kingdom of England. Missionaries, Catechists, and Schoolmasters, are employed by this Society in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Upper and Lower

Canada, Cape Breton, the Bahama Islands, the Coast of Africa, New South Wales, and Norfolk Island. The Missionaries are supplied with books for a library, and Bibles, Prayer-Books, and small Religious Tracts, to distribute among their people as occasions may require. This and the preceding Society are directed entirely by members of the Established Church of England.

" The Society in Scotland for propagating Christian Knowledge employs Schoolmasters, Catechists, and Missionaries, and distributes the Holy Scriptures and a few other religious books. The Scriptures have been translated at the Society's expense into Gaëlic. A Parent Board is established at Edinburgh for conducting general business; but a considerable accession of strength accrues from a Correspondent Board established in London, before which annual sermons are preached by ministers of different denominations. The exertions of this Society extend over the Highlands of Scotland, the contiguous Islands, and a part of North America.

" The Society for promoting Religious Knowledge among the Poor distributes the Holy Scriptures, and a great variety of pieces on religious subjects. Every subscriber of a guinea annually is entitled once in two years to Bibles or other books circulated by the Society, according to his option, to the amount of forty shillings; subscribers of more than one guinea annually

are entitled to Bibles or other books to a proportionally higher amount. The prices at which the books are estimated, appear in the annual accounts, and in a slip of paper which accompanies the parcels sent to subscribers. At these prices the Public in general may become purchasers.

" The Bible Society* was instituted for the sole use of the army and navy of Great Britain. It circulates only the Scriptures. The Committee state that they have been enabled, by the aid of subscribers, and collections made at different places of worship, to distribute among the regiments and ships specified in their printed account, 30,000 Bibles, and a considerable number of Testaments. The mode of application is a request signed by an officer in the army or navy, addressed to the Committee, expressing the number under his command.

" The Society for the Support and Encouragement of Sunday Schools provides Bibles, Testaments, and Spelling-Books, and receives applications from any part of England and Wales. The founders of Schools are expected, when they

* In a note appended to the second edition, " the Dublin Association" is mentioned with the honor which it deserved, as having " distributed among the poor in Ireland, 10,000 Bibles, and 12,000 Testaments," and as " advancing towards its original object, ' *that no house or cabin in Ireland, in which there is a single person who can read, shall be destitute of the Holy Scriptures.*' "

apply for aid, to inform the Secretary, by letter, of the number of the scholars, and, in the event of a second or third application, to state their progress and behaviour. The letters are presented to the Committee, and a gratuitous supply voted according to the exigency of the case.

" In addition to the above-mentioned means of diffusing scriptural knowledge, we may notice the existence of private donations and bequests relating to the same object, the numerous charity-schools maintained throughout the week, and the more recent Institutions under different forms for disseminating inspired truth both in our own and in foreign countries."

To this enumeration of existing Societies, Mr. Hughes would doubtless have added, had he been acquainted with the fact, a reference to an Institution then recently dissolved—The French Bible Society. As this Society was altogether unknown to Mr. Hughes, and is little, if at all, known to the public in general, a brief account of it in this place will scarcely be deemed an improper digression.

The French Bible Society was instituted in May, 1792, and commenced its operations by opening a correspondence with a respectable Minister of the Reformed Church at Paris, and treating with a Printer of reputation in that capital for an edition of the French Bible, of

which the Protestant Minister who had recommended him was to take the superintendence. The revolutionary war having put a period to all communication between the two countries, The French Bible Society suspended proceedings, and invested the amount subscribed, (with the exception of 4,000 livres advanced to the Printer at Paris,) in the public funds. On the re-establishment of intercourse between France and England in the year 1801, the Society learnt by a letter from the Protestant Minister, that the Printer was living, but that the revolution had totally ruined him. "That respectable father of a family" (says this correspondent) "has great difficulty to extricate himself from his embarrassments. The funds remitted to his hands from England, are, I imagine, consumed; while the task he had undertaken has totally failed. We have lived" (he adds) "in times which have destroyed every thing, overturned every thing: and all must be begun afresh."

The Society, discouraged by these and similar difficulties, and apprehending that their original design of circulating French Bibles among the Roman Catholics in France was become impracticable, resolved to apply the money of which they had been so long possessed, to the purchase of English Bibles, for distribution among "poor Catholics and others in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland:" 2,000 copies were

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accordingly procured; of which 1,000 were entrusted to the care of the late Rev. Dr. Coke, a principal Minister in the Wesleyan connection, to be dispersed " by the means of their Missionaries among the Catholics in Ireland." A letter having been received from William Hall, Esq. of Dublin, pointing out other channels through which " 10,000 Bibles might be usefully distributed in Ireland, and offering to guarantee their correct distribution, the remaining 1,000 copies were, in the month of August, 1803, placed at his disposal: and after this act, and the necessary formalities of pecuniary settlement, The French Bible Society was finally dissolved.

The following Prospectus,* issued by the above Society, soon after its formation in 1792, contains so much of the liberal spirit and practical views which have characterized the British and Foreign Bible Society, that the author of this work would deem himself inexcusable were he to decline giving it insertion.

" THE FRENCH BIBLE SOCIETY

is formed for the purpose of disseminating pure Christian Knowledge in France, by obtaining a

* For this document, by means of which he first became acquainted with the subject of the French Bible Society, the author is indebted, through his friend Mr. Hughes, to a gentleman, highly and deservedly esteemed for his learning, piety, and amiable spirit—the Rev. Dr. Smith, of Homerton.

general distribution of the Holy Scriptures, printed in the French tongue, throughout that nation.

" To accomplish such a design, would be too arduous and extensive an undertaking for any individual, or for a small circle. The general concurrence of all who know the value and feel the influence of the sacred writings is therefore invited.

" It is intended, that as far as possible, *those persons in the French nation, who are now destitute of this divine treasure in an intelligible language, shall be furnished with copies of it in their mother tongue.* The Poor will be supplied (gratis where necessary, or) at a very low price; and quantities will be lodged with ministers and other proper persons well known in the different provinces, that those who wish it may purchase at usual rates, and the wealthy and benevolent may be supplied at reduced prices with quantities to distribute. For this purpose, large contracts will be entered into on the most reasonable terms that can be obtained. The persons to whom the books may be sent will be desired to act as agents for the General Society, and at convenient intervals to transmit an account of distribution or sale, and of receipts.

" The Society now formed in London under the above name, have by their Committee begun a correspondence with some Gentlemen in Paris, who are friends to this scheme, and who have

expressed an intention of forming a similar Society there; to whom, when embodied, will be committed the management of the business in that kingdom; to superintend the press for those editions which may be printed there; to distribute the books into, and to establish and conduct correspondence with, the different parts of the nation; to obtain the assistance and encouragement of their countrymen to this undertaking, and from time to time to transmit to this Society what information they may collect of the progress and success thereof.

"The plan has also been made known in Holland, and considerable assistance is with good reason expected from thence; and it is not doubted, that *smaller societies will be formed in the provincial towns of France, to assist the general plan.* From this source, especially, may authentic and early communications be received by the different bodies composing this Society, respecting the success attending, and the advantages arising from, this Institution.

"At present, the business of this Society is conducted by a Committee, which is chosen at the General Meetings of the Subscribers. The amount of the subscriptions is lodged in the hands of respectable Banking-houses, subject to the order of the Society.

"The Society wish to engage the assistance of every friend to the spreading of religious know-

ledge, and would beg leave to *recommend the forming of Societies in different parts of the country, to assist them in the attainment of their object;* and if Clergymen and Ministers of every denomination, would recommend the cause to their different congregations, and, where convenient, would make public collections for the support and extension of it, it would certainly tend much to the forwarding of this important design."

But to return:

While the whole of Mr. Hughes's Essay, from the good sense which it contains, and the candor which it breathes, is worthy of perusal, the following passages, both, from their intrinsic excellency, and from their accordance with subsequent events, have a peculiar claim to attention.

"Let us then cast a friendly eye over distant countries, and be the parents of the first Institution that ever emanated from one of the nations of Europe, for the express purpose of doing good to all the rest."

"The proposed Society would bespeak much attention which was never yet brought to bear on a subject so truly grand and momentous. Religion would occupy a larger space in the public mind, and the advocates of religion enjoy a new opportunity of testifying the strength of their convictions and the fervor of their zeal. A new impulse would be given to kindred Institu-

tions; and measures hitherto unthought of would be added to those which have long displayed their beneficial effects."

"We have specified Europe; at the same time we would allow ample scope. Correspondence might more or less include every quarter of the globe."

"Many arrangements must be left to the determination of experience. Light will break in as the friends of the Institution advance: they will act as occasions dictate; always having that to do, which will either connect with remoter branches of their design, or stand well insulated and alone."

It is impossible to reflect on these observations, written nearly a year before the Society was formed, without being forcibly struck by the remarkable exactness with which they have been verified.

The conclusion is in a strain so diametrically opposite to that spirit of rivalry in which the Society has been said by some of its opponents to have been projected, that I cannot allow myself to omit it.

"But God puts honour upon mortals by employing their agency in the fulfilment of his promises, and the promotion of his glory: and if those of his designs may be considered as indicating an approach toward maturity, which most unite and engage his servants; is it not probable

that knowledge and salvation will follow close in the train of those labours, to which, with respectful deference, we now call the attention of the christian world? May we not, therefore, look forward to a large meeting of our fellow-christians, whose unanimous and loud voice shall encourage us to go and do all that is in our hearts? But should we in this respect be disappointed, our labour will not be regretted, if it serve in a few instances to draw more attention to the Bible, *if it contribute to the strength of Societies already established*, and especially if it promote the spirit of distribution among those, who having long regarded the truth as it is in Jesus, have yet done little toward enriching the world with its treasures. Conscious, however, of having discharged a duty, and encouraged to expect some favourable result; we here conclude, leaving our exhortations with the consciences of men, and our prayers in the bosom of God."

Copies of this Essay were now put into circulation through a variety of channels; and it cannot be questioned that they must have contributed materially to prepare the way for proceedings of greater publicity and decision.

It was not till the month of January 1804, that the measures had attained a sufficient degree of ripeness, in the estimation of the Conductors, to justify the consideration of steps for carrying them into actual execution. An outline of a plan for

the projected Society had, early in the preceding year, been prepared by Samuel Mills, Esq. a gentleman, who, to the service he rendered in laying the foundation of the Society, has added that of a judicious and useful co-operation in the promotion of its interests, and the management of its concerns.

The plan thus sketched out was now regularly completed; and the title was altered, at the suggestion of the same individual from whom the first idea of the Institution proceeded, from "A Society for promoting a more extensive circulation of the Holy Scriptures both at home and abroad," the form in which it originally stood; to the definite and comprehensive designation, of "The British and Foreign Bible Society."*

Things being thus far advanced, it was determined to convene a public meeting: a circular address was accordingly drawn up; and copies of it were forwarded to such individuals as were thought likely to favor the proposed undertaking, or at least to give an impartial hearing to what should be urged in its recommendation. The circular address, which bore for

* These particulars are stated with the more minuteness, in order to show how utterly unfounded was the insinuation of one of the Society's earliest adversaries, that *Tracts* formed a part of the original plan. See Country Clergyman's Letter to Lord Teignmouth, p. 36.

its title "The Importance of a further Distribution of Bibles," briefly touched upon the principal topics which had been discussed in the Essay, and referred to that publication for more complete and detailed information.

The following extract from this address will be found to deserve particular attention, as it explains the views of the projectors in recommending the formation of the proposed Society; accounts for the delay by which the measures preparatory to its formation had been retarded; and discovers the spirit of candor, conciliation, and amity, in which it was designed that its future operations should be conducted, both at home and abroad.

"Several Societies have been formed for the propagation of Scripture-truth, but there is room for several more. This assertion is affectingly confirmed by the result of specific inquiries recently made both in Britain and on the Continent. A few individuals, the promoters of these inquiries, have had frequent discussions on the subject, and are at length encouraged to hope that they shall realize their wishes in the formation of a new Society.

"Their views are considerably detailed in an Essay printed at the commencement of last year. Europe was then in peace, and they were flattered with the prospect of extensive co-operation, at home and abroad. But the flames of war,

bursting forth again with augmented violence, and spreading unusual alarm through the country, occasioned a suspension of measures requisite for maturing the plan. Now that the public mind is partly recovered from its consternation, though we may not proceed with all the advantages attached to a time of peace, we may be laying a solid foundation, and preparing suitable materials against a happier season.

" If the present period is not the most auspicious to such undertakings, neither is there any danger of its being fatal to them. ' The wall of Jerusalem,' it is written, ' shall be built in troublous times.' In fact, how many successful efforts for the promotion of human happiness have been made, amidst the clouds and tempests of national calamity! It should also be remembered, that the present is the only period of which *we* are sure. Our days of service are both few and uncertain; whatsoever, therefore, our hands find to do, let us do with our might.

" Under these impressions, it has been proposed by the individuals referred to above, to institute a Society entitled

THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

" Its object—to promote the circulation of the Scriptures in some of the principal living languages.

" The sphere of its activity—First, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and the European Continent: afterwards, remoter regions, as the state of the finances may admit, and the urgency of particular cases may require.

" The object and the sphere of such a Society, considered in their union, distinguish it from all existing Societies.

" The Bible Society distributes the Scriptures only, but confines its distributions to the British Army and Navy.

" The distribution of Bibles in other Societies forms only a part of their plan; and, with a very few exceptions, the exertions of those Societies are limited to Britain.

" The projected Society, not refusing to co-operate on the same ground, would traverse scenes which other Societies are, by their regulations, forbidden to occupy; and, presenting nothing but the inspired volume, would be sure to circulate truth, and truth alone; hereby avoiding the occasions of controversy, and opening a channel into which Christians of every name might, without scruple, pour their charitable contributions.

" Several persons have expressed much solicitude on the subject, and, together with those whom it has chiefly interested, look cheerfully forward to the time when a Society, founded on so extensive and liberal a principle, shall be able

to announce, in a very public manner, its ample patronage, and its beneficent exertions."

To these observations the following notice, with the accompanying signatures, was subjoined:

" Sir,

" The prefixed Address is respectfully submitted to your perusal. A Public Meeting will be held relative to the formation of the proposed Society, at the London Tavern, on Wednesday the 7th of March, when your presence, if you approve the object, is requested by

Granville Sharp,	Richard Lea,
William Alers,	Alexander Maitland,
Joseph Benwell,	Samuel Mills,
Henry Boase,	Joseph Reyner,
Robert Cowie,	Herman Schroeder,
Samuel Foyster,	Christopher Sundius,
Joseph Smith Gosse,	George Wolff.

" The chair will be taken at twelve o'clock precisely."

It was in this stage of the business, and through the medium of the circular above-described, that the writer of this History became first acquainted with the plan on which so much has been said, and in the subsequent execution of which he was induced to take so considerable a part. As his

own conduct is so greatly mixed up with the transactions which it will be his duty to record, he trusts he shall be excused for adverting, both in this and in other parts of his History, to such particulars of a personal nature, as appear necessary to the perspicuity and connection of the work.

Early in the summer of 1803, the author received from Mr. Hughes, with whom he was but very slightly acquainted, two copies of the Essay on " The excellence of the Holy Scriptures, &c." accompanied with a request, that he would accept one for his own use, and present the other to the Bishop of London, and solicit his Lordship's patronage to such an Institution as that Essay was designed to recommend. The author complied with so much of Mr. Hughes's request as respected the presentation of his Essay to the Bishop; but beyond that, he neither felt himself authorized nor inclined to proceed. The project for attempting the universal circulation of the Scriptures, and for uniting, in pursuit of that end, the Members, Pastors, and Prelates of the Established Church with the different sects and denominations of Dissenters, appeared to be fraught with so many and such invincible difficulties, that, regarding it as utterly chimerical, he took little pains either to understand or to recommend it. So completely indeed had the presumption of its impracticability taken possession

of his mind, that he is not aware of having given the plan any further consideration, till the receipt of the circular revived the recollection of it; and the name of his intimate and valued friend Granville Sharp, at the head of the signatures, determined him to attend the Meeting, at which its merits were to be publicly and solemnly discussed.

On Wednesday the 7th of March, 1804, the Meeting, as convened by the circular notice, took place at the London Tavern, Bishopsgate Street. Having the preceding evening conferred with Mr. Granville Sharp, who appeared to have affixed his signature, rather out of respect to the object, than from any particular knowledge and approbation of the means, the author accompanied him by appointment to the scene in which the business was to be transacted. On entering the Tavern, they were conducted to a room, in which were seated a number of persons, diligently occupied in preparing the resolutions to be submitted to the general body. The author had scarcely taken the station which the courtesy of this Provisional Committee had assigned him, when he observed, among their number, three individuals of respectable appearance, whom, from wearing their hats and from the peculiarity of their garb, he perceived to be Quakers.*

* The author trusts he shall not be thought to treat the "Society of Friends" with disrespect, by using that term,

It had long been an opinion current in the world, that this class of Christians entertained only a qualified respect for the letter of Scripture; and that, consequently, the Bible was very little read and recommended among them. Participating in the influence of this popular prejudice, the author could not contemplate the appearance of Quakers in such a connection, without feeling a sort of astonishment, of which his subsequent experience of their conduct in the British and Foreign Bible Society has repeatedly made him ashamed.

It would not perhaps be difficult to account for the origin and prevalence of a misconception so injurious to the character of the individuals to whom it applied. It was generally known that the Quakers were not accustomed to use the Scriptures in their assemblies for religious worship. Their celebrated apologist, Barclay, had spoken of the Scriptures in terms very different from those which orthodox Christians have been accustomed to employ; and many of their writers had expressed themselves on the same subject, after his example, in very indistinct and unsatisfactory language. When to these considerations is added the almost utter ignorance

when speaking of them, by which they are generally known in the world, rather than the ambiguous (though certainly more proper one) by which they are known among each other.

which prevailed concerning the private habits and domestic economy of this quiet and retiring people, it will not be matter of surprise, that an opinion should have been entertained of their indifference to the Scriptures, for which there appears in reality to have been so little foundation.*

In fact, the peculiarities of the Quakers, both in sentiment and discipline, were of a nature to keep them more widely separated from the mass of the community than any other Society of Christians; and hence it resulted that (with the exception of their exemplary morality) their real character was for a considerable period so defectively known. The abolition of the slave-trade was

* The following extract from their Yearly Epistle for 1815, will be read with unqualified pleasure.

"It has afforded us much satisfaction to believe, that the Christian practice of daily reading in families a portion of Holy Scripture, with a subsequent pause for retirement and reflection, is increasing among us. We conceive that it is both the duty and the interest of those who believe in the doctrines of the Gospel, and who possess the invaluable treasure of the sacred Records, frequently to recur to them for instruction and consolation. We are desirous that this wholesome domestic regulation may be adopted every where. Heads of families, who have themselves experienced the benefit of religious instruction, will do well to consider whether, in this respect, they have not a duty to discharge to their servants and others of their household. Parents, looking sincerely for help to Him of whom these Scriptures testify, may not unfrequently, on such occasions, feel themselves enabled and engaged to open to the minds of their interesting charge, the great truths of Christian duty and Christian redemption."

the first public measure which brought them into contact with the rest of the community, and engaged them in a co-partnership of practical benevolence with the members of other religious denominations: but it was reserved for the British and Foreign Bible Society to enlarge the boundaries of this philanthropic intercourse; and to incorporate the affections and exertions of this benevolent people with those of their Fellow-Christians in every part of the world.

The reader will, it is hoped, excuse a digression, which had for its object to place in a just light the character of a people whose services in the British and Foreign Bible Society have not been surpassed by those of the warmest and most active of its members. It will illustrate, at the same time, the tendency of this Catholic Institution to correct the errors into which Christians of every denomination have been betrayed, in forming their judgment of each other; and to inculcate upon them all the necessary obligations of justice, candor, and charity. But to return:

Previously to the termination of this preparatory meeting, a paper was put into the author's hands, containing a series of Resolutions, accompanied with a request, that, if he should approve them, he would move their adoption, as the basis of the proposed Society. The arrangements being completed, the parties were ushered into the great room, where a respectable company was

assembled, amounting to about 300 persons of different religious denominations. Mr. Granville Sharp was unanimously called to the chair, and so strongly was he impressed with the importance of the object, that, notwithstanding his almost unconquerable aversion to occupy a place which implied such distinction, (an aversion never overcome in the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave-trade, of which he was appointed perpetual Chairman,*) he obeyed the unanimous call, and presided accordingly.

* The following extract from Mr. Clarkson's History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade, will confirm what is stated above.

"At one of these meetings, (says Mr. Clarkson, speaking of the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade,) a resolution was made, that Granville Sharp, Esq. be appointed chairman. This appointment, though now first formally made in the minute book, was always understood to have taken place; but the modesty of Mr. Sharp was such, that, though repeatedly pressed, he would never consent to take the chair, and he generally refrained from coming into the room till after he knew it to be taken. Nor could he be prevailed upon, even after this resolution, to alter his conduct; for though he continued to sign the papers which were handed to him by virtue of holding this office, *he never was once seated as the chairman during the twenty years in which he attended at these meetings.* I thought it not improper to mention this trait in his character. Conscious that he engaged in the cause of his fellow-creatures solely upon the sense of his duty as a Christian, he seems to have supposed either that he had done nothing extraordinary to merit such a distinction, or to have been fearful lest the acceptance of it should bring a stain upon the motive on which alone he undertook it."—*Clarkson's History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade*, vol. i. p. 449.

The business of the day was opened by Robert Cowie, Esq.; William Alers, Esq. followed; and he was succeeded by Samuel Mills, Esq. and the Rev. Mr. Hughes. These gentlemen explained the nature and design of the projected Society; demonstrated its necessity, from the great want of the Holy Scriptures, and the insufficiency of all the means in existence to supply it; and in a strain of good sense, temperate zeal, and perspicuous information, urged the importance of its immediate establishment. After these speakers had sat down, there arose another advocate, in the person of the Rev. Mr. Steinkopff, whose address corroborated what had been already advanced, and in the happiest manner completed the effect. The author had yielded, he will confess, a reluctant assent to the pleadings of those by whom Mr. Steinkopff was preceded: but the representation which *he* gave of that scarcity of the Scriptures which he had himself observed in foreign parts; the unaffected simplicity with which he described the spiritual wants of his German fellow-countrymen; and the tender pathos with which he appealed on their behalf to the compassion and munificence of British Christians, spoke so forcibly both to the mind and the heart, as to subdue all the author's remaining powers of resistance, and decide him in favor of the Institution.

After Mr. Steinkopff had resumed his seat, the

author rose, by an impulse which he had neither the inclination nor the power to disobey, in order to express his conviction, that such an Institution as that which had been recommended, was manifestly needed; and that therefore the establishment of it ought not to be delayed. His emotions, on rising, were such, as he will not attempt to describe. Surrounded by a multitude of Christians, whose doctrinal and ritual differences had for ages kept them asunder, and who had been taught to regard each other with a sort of pious estrangement, or rather of consecrated hostility; and reflecting on the object and the end which had brought them so harmoniously together; he felt an impression, which the lapse of more than ten years has scarcely diminished, and which no length of time will entirely remove. The scene was new: nothing analogous to it had perhaps been exhibited before the public since Christians had begun to organize among each other the strife of separation, and to carry into their own camp that war which they ought to have waged in concert against the common enemy. To the author it appeared to indicate the dawn of a new era in Christendom; and to portend something like the return of those auspicious days, when "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul;" and when, as a consequence of that union, to a certain degree at least, "the Word of God mightily grew and prevailed."

After giving utterance to these feelings, in the best way he could, the author moved, as requested, the following Resolutions.

1. A Society shall be formed, with this designation,

THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY;

of which the sole object shall be to encourage a wider dispersion of the Holy Scriptures.

2. This Society shall add its endeavours to those employed by other Societies for circulating the Scriptures through the British dominions, and shall also, according to its ability, extend its influence to other countries, whether Christian, Mahometan, or Pagan.

3. Each Subscriber of One Guinea annually shall be a Member.

4. Each Subscriber of Twenty Pounds at one time, shall be a Member for life; a Subscriber of Five Guineas per annum, shall be a Governor; and a Subscriber of Fifty Pounds, or upwards, at one time, shall be a Governor for life. Governors shall be entitled to attend and vote at all the Meetings of the Committee.

5. An Executor, paying a Bequest of Fifty Pounds, shall be a Member for life; or of One Hundred Pounds, or more, a Governor for life.

6. Each Member shall be entitled, under the direction of the Committee, to purchase Bibles and Testaments, for the purpose of gratuitous distribution, at the Society's prices, which shall be as low as possible; but no English Bibles or Testaments shall be *given away* in Great Britain by the *Society itself*.

7. The Annual Meeting of the Society shall be held in the month of May, when the Treasurer and Committee shall be chosen, the Accounts audited, and the Proceedings of the foregoing Year reported.

8. The Committee shall consist of Thirty-six Members, who shall conduct the business of the Society, and have power to call an extraordinary General Meeting. Twenty-four of the Committee, who shall have most frequently attended, shall be eligible to re-election the ensuing year.

9. The Committee shall recommend, at the General Meetings, such Noblemen and Gentlemen as shall have rendered important Services to the Society, to be elected Honorary Members.

These Resolutions, which are inserted at length, that the reader may observe the gradations of improvement in the constitution of the Society, were adopted with unanimous demonstrations of cordiality and joy. The Institution was considered as established; and more than 700*l.* were immediately subscribed.

Thus terminated the proceedings of this extraordinary day, a day memorable in the experience of all who participated in the transactions by which it was signalized; a day, to which posterity will look back, as giving to the world, and that in times of singular perturbation and distress, an Institution for diffusing, on the grandest scale, the tidings of peace and salvation; a day, which will be recorded as peculiarly honorable to the character of Great Britain, and as fixing an important epoch in the religious history of mankind.

The British and Foreign Bible Society having thus been established, the author felt it important to make an early communication of the fact to the Bishop of London. On his return therefore to Fulham, he immediately addressed a letter to the Bishop, at that time in residence at London-house, St. James's Square; and as his Lordship was pleased to honor the author with much of his confidence, gave him a full and circumstantial account of the entire transaction.

In this communication the author stated to his Lordship what he had witnessed, and how

he had considered it his duty to act. He mentioned the evidence, which had been produced, of the want of the Scriptures, both in Great Britain and in foreign parts; described the comprehensive principle on which the Society was constituted, and the spirit of candor and liberality in which it had been formed; submitted to his Lordship, that the challenge so liberally given, on the part of our Dissenting Brethren, ought, on our part, to be as liberally accepted; and expressed his conviction, that it was equally expedient for the honor of the Church, and for the accomplishment of the Society's object, that the Ministers and Members of our Ecclesiastical Establishment should give it their decided countenance and support.

This representation was not lost on the enlightened mind and candid temper of Bishop Porteus. Ever alive to the concerns of religion and humanity, and extending his views of responsibility and usefulness beyond the limits of a peculiar jurisdiction, this excellent Prelate was accustomed to enter with zeal into plans of general benevolence; and to take a real interest in whatever regarded the dissemination of truth, and virtue, and happiness, in any part of the world. A plan, therefore, contemplating, as its object, the universal circulation of the Holy Scriptures, could scarcely fail to meet with a favorable reception in such a quarter. After a reasonable delay, the Bishop

replied to this communication, in very satisfactory and encouraging terms. In the course of his reply, his Lordship distinctly stated, that "he very much approved the design of the Bible Society;" that "he had mentioned it to several of his friends, who also approved of it;" but that he wished, for their satisfaction and his own, to have further information; and added, that if the author transmitted to him the desired intelligence respecting the actual Subscribers and Members of the Institution, "it might materially promote the success of the plan."*

* The Rev. Archdeacon Hodgson has expressed the views which the Bishop had in attaching himself to the Society, in terms, which, while they do justice to the enlarged liberality of his Lordship's mind, reflect no small credit on the discernment and the candor of his Biographer. The following are the Archdeacon's words:

"The plan of this Society embraced a most extensive range of action: and in order to raise an adequate fund, it was thought necessary, not to confine it merely to Members of the Established Church, but to take in without exception all denominations of Christians. But then, on the other hand, it was laid down as a primary and fundamental rule, from which there was in no instance to be the slightest deviation, that its sole and exclusive object should be *the circulation of the Scriptures, and the Scriptures only, without note or comment.*

"A limitation thus absolute and unequivocal, removed from the Bishop's mind all doubt and hesitation. He saw instantly that a design of such magnitude, which aimed at nothing less than the dispersion of the Bible over every accessible part of the world, could be accomplished only by the association of men of all religious persuasions. He looked forward to great results from such a combination of effort. He entertained the hope, that it might operate as a bond of union between

While this negociation was proceeding with the Bishop of London, very active and unremitted exertions were made to complete the internal organization of the Society, and adapt it to general acceptance and support. Nothing had been determined on the 7th of March, beyond the simple act of establishing a Society under the designation of "The British and Foreign Bible Society," and the adoption of certain elementary propositions, as the outline of its future constitution. A Committee had indeed been nominated; but the appointment of officers, the selection of patronage, and the adjustment of all the practical machinery, were measures which remained to be executed; and the execution of them was attended with difficulties, which, had the object of the Society been less definite, and the attachment to it less sincere, would, in all human probability, have proved insuperable.

contending parties; and that by bringing them together in one point of vast moment, about which there could hardly be a diversity of opinion, it might gradually allay that bitterness of dispute, and put an end to those unhappy divisions, which had so long tarnished the credit of the Christian world. Whilst therefore he remained firmly attached to the original Society, whose exertions, as far as its limited sphere allowed, no one ever held in higher estimation, he gave at the same time the sanction of his name without scruple to the new one; and the more he considered its object, and the longer experience he had of the spirit and principles on which it was conducted, the more deeply he was convinced, that it merited all the support which the Church of England could give it."

The Committee nominated at the formation of the Society, and on which these executive measures had devolved, consisted of individuals, highly respectable, and conscientiously devoted to the service of the Institution. But the diversity of religious sentiment, connection, and denomination, by which they were characterized, may naturally be supposed to have thrown serious obstacles in the way of that mutual understanding which is the only sure basis of a sincere and steady co-operation. Never, perhaps, before were thirty-six persons brought together for the prosecution and attainment of a common purpose, whose views, and habits, and prejudices, exhibited a greater and more unpromising variety. Strangers in many instances to each other's persons, and not a little disaffected to each other's religious systems, they had to struggle against feelings to which time and mutual alienation had given in a manner the authority of principles; and to balance the value of the object itself against that of the minor considerations which must be sacrificed in order to attain it. It is not therefore to be wondered at, that, in the outset of their proceedings, a Committee thus composed should experience no ordinary embarrassment. A sense of propriety dictated, that parties so strangely diversified should mutually advance towards each other with wariness and reserve: and it is natural to conclude, that in the exercise of this

caution, they would occasionally betray those emotions of jealousy, which served to demonstrate, how much they were indebted to the influence of the Bible for effecting their approximation to a common standard.

These observations must be considered as chiefly applying to the state of the Committee, antecedently to that improvement which it afterwards received; and they are made in this place, in order that the reader may be the better qualified to estimate the difficulties attending the accomplishment of those measures which we are now to relate; and which, while they completed the draught of the Society's constitution, laid the foundation of that mutual confidence, cordiality, and co-operation, by which its Committee have been, and continue to be, so honorably distinguished.*

The first of the measures referred to was the

* In proof of what is stated above, may be adduced the following testimony delivered by the Right Hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer, at the Eighth Anniversary of the Institution.

"I have entered very considerably into the details of business in the Committee; I have attended many of its meetings; and I wish to bear this public testimony to the harmony, candor, and impartiality, with which the concerns of the Society are conducted: that from the part taken, and the sentiments uttered, by the persons who take the lead in the conduct of the Society's affairs, I should not be able to ascertain who are Churchmen and who are Dissenters."

appointment of a Secretary. On the 12th of March, only five days subsequently to that on which the Society was formed, the subject was started in a full meeting of the Committee; and a respectable member, after passing a deserved encomium on the talents, the character, and the services of that individual to whom the Society was so eminently indebted for its origin and formation, concluded by moving, that the Rev. Joseph Hughes be appointed Secretary to the Institution. Under a sense of duty, the author took upon himself the painful, and apparently invidious task of objecting to such an appointment. Without questioning the purity of those motives by which the proposer was actuated, or the justice of that commendation which he had bestowed on the individual proposed, the author ventured to represent, in strong terms, both the impropriety and the impolicy of constituting a Dissenting Minister, however highly respectable and meritorious, the Secretary of an Institution which was designed to unite the whole body of Christians, and for which its Directors had evinced so laudable an anxiety to obtain the patronage and co-operation of the Established Church.

Into this view of the subject, both the mover of the question, and the Committee at large, most readily entered; and it was immediately perceived that the objection might be removed, by asso-

ciating in the appointment, with the Rev. Mr. Hughes, a Clergyman of the Established Church. An amendment to this effect was proposed, and unanimously adopted; and the author was invited to accept the situation. Highly as he estimated the honor which such an invitation implied, he respectfully, but peremptorily, declined it. In so doing, he assigned, as the ground of his refusal, his domestic, parochial, and other employments; and directed the attention of the Committee to the Rev. Josiah Pratt, B.D. Secretary to the Church Missionary Society, at that time present, as a person who united the talents and experience which such an office might be supposed to require. To this recommendation the Committee acceded; and the Rev. Josiah Pratt and the Rev. Joseph Hughes were appointed Secretaries accordingly.

The Committee now appeared to think that they had paid due regard to every consideration which claimed their attention, and had rendered their Secretariat department complete; when an individual* arose, and observed, that the work was imperfect, and that a serious deficiency still remained to be supplied. Provision had, he said, been made for the Establishment and the Dis-

* This individual was William Alers, Esq. a Gentleman of known philanthropy, and who took a prominent and useful part in the Meeting at which the Society was formed. See p. 43.

senters, but none for the Foreign Churches. He therefore recommended, that another office should be created, that of Foreign Secretary; and that it should be conferred on a Gentleman, who had already manifested his disposition and his ability to serve the Society—the Rev. Mr. Steinkopff. On the proposal, as it respected both the office and the individual, there was but one opinion; and the result was, that the Rev. Mr. Steinkopff was unanimously added to the number of the Secretaries.

Thus suddenly, and as it were by casualty, was the plan which regulates the Secretaryship of the Society concerted and matured. The progress of an hour carried the Committee on, from the hasty suggestion of a short-sighted attachment to the wise determination of a liberal policy; and the Meeting, which commenced with a proposition calculated to gratify one section only of the Christian community, terminated in a conclusion, which, from its comprehensive provisions, was adapted to satisfy, to conciliate, and to unite all classes of Christians, both at home and abroad.

The principal offices in the Secretaryship having been thus satisfactorily filled up, the attention of the Committee was, at their next Meeting, directed to the appointment of an Assistant Secretary and Collector. It was their intention to unite the two occupations in one

and the same officer. Two individuals, Mr. Joseph Tarn, and Mr. Thomas Smith, were nominated as candidates for this office, with recommendations so strong, so highly approved, and so equally balanced, as to make it difficult for the Committee to determine, which of the two it would be their duty to prefer, or how they could in fact accept either, without the risk of wounding some feeling, and sacrificing some advantage, by rejecting the other. With that spirit of wisdom and accommodation which has characterized their earliest and their latest proceedings, they decided to avail themselves of the services of both. The respective departments of these two officers were assigned with admirable precision by a very intelligent Sub-Committee; and both the choice of the individuals, and the distribution of their employments, were afterwards justified by an ample and beneficial experience.

The next steps which were taken respected a plan for new modelling the Committee,—a revision of the Laws,—and certain other steps of inferior moment, which had for their object to regulate the internal machinery of the Institution.

The first of these, the plan for new modelling the Committee, was a measure, which for the felicity of thought with which it was conceived, the good temper on all sides with which it was

executed, and the practical advantages with which it has been followed, deserves to be particularly related and explained.

By the eighth resolution, as settled at the formation of the Society on the 7th of March, it was enacted, that the Committee for conducting its business "should consist of thirty-six Members." Nothing was, however, stated or defined in that resolution, as to the description which these Members should answer, or the religious communion to which they should respectively belong. They were chosen therefore, indiscriminately, from the Episcopal Clergy, Dissenting Ministers, and the Laity at large; with little reference to any other qualification, than that of known or reputed attachment to religion, and either ascertained or probable regard for the object and success of the Institution.

It appeared, upon reflection, that a list, which should exhibit such a combination as would naturally arise from so desultory a choice, might excite a prejudice against the designs of the Society, and give it that aspect in the eyes of the public, which would preclude it from general support. It was further considered, that it would be highly inexpedient to let the composition of a body, entrusted with the direction of the Society's affairs, remain wholly undefined; and to leave the annual election of its Members to the uncertain operation of

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casual and unregulated feeling. A plan was therefore concerted for modelling the Committee on a principle which should define the respective proportions of Churchmen, Dissenters, and Foreigners; and prescribe such other regulations as might obviate prejudice, prevent invidious competition, and maintain inviolate the exercise of those rights both of conscience and judgment, which no constituent part of the Committee were either expected or disposed to surrender.

According to this plan, it was determined, that the Committee should consist exclusively of Laymen; that of the thirty-six Members, to which number it was limited, six should be Foreigners, resident in, or near the Metropolis; and of the remaining thirty, one half should be Members of the Established Church, and the other half Members of other Christian denominations. In order, however, to secure the services of the Clergy and of Ministers generally, provision was made for their admission to a seat and a vote in the Committee, on the terms which made them Members of the Society; a provision, which, while it concealed their names, recognized their privileges, and retained their co-operation. The merit of this plan belongs wholly to the Rev. Josiah Pratt: and when it is considered with whom the Society originated, and under what sort of influence its first Committee had been formed, it will appear, that it must have required

much energy on the one part, and no less moderation on the other, to accomplish a measure which involved so many and such material changes. The subject was indeed very freely discussed; and objections were urged against parcelling out the Committee by lines of religious distinction: but the discussion was conducted throughout in a Christian spirit; and ended in a unanimous determination, to adopt the proposed improvements in all their extent.

So considerable an alteration, or rather enlargement, of the law which directed the appointment of the Committee, demanded, to render it valid and give it operation, the sanction of a General Meeting; and it appearing desirable to take advantage of such an occasion to consolidate the establishment and extend the reputation of the Society, a resolution was formed, that the whole of its regulations should be carefully revised, and a finished draught of the constitution be prepared for the approbation of the general body.

While the business created by this resolution was proceeding, a change was projected and accomplished in the office of the Secretary for the Established Church. The proposition which led to it originated with the Rev. Mr. Pratt, who made such a representation to the Committee, as disposed them to concur with him in believing, that it would be for the advantage

of the Institution, if the author could be induced to occupy the station which had been so ably and beneficially filled by himself. The grounds upon which the author's consent was solicited, were such as seemed scarcely to leave him an option. He therefore acquiesced in the proposed arrangement, and the change took place accordingly. Mr. Pratt had been appointed Secretary on the 12th of March; on the 23d of April his voluntary resignation was accepted, and the author was appointed to succeed him. The conduct of Mr. Pratt in this transaction was too creditable to the integrity of his mind, and his superiority to the desire of personal distinction, not to attract the notice and excite the gratitude of the Committee. They marked their sense of his generosity by a testimony of their warmest approbation; and voted him their unanimous thanks " for his very disinterested attention to the welfare of the Institution."

In the same interval too, within which the circumstance just mentioned occurred, and while the business of internal organization was in progress, attention was directed to such measures of external arrangement as might hereafter conduce to the Society's domestic and foreign operations. A train was laid for ascertaining, as widely as possible, the want of the Scriptures; and every thing was done, which zeal could prompt, and an Institution but partially formed could be expected

to achieve, in order to promote inquiry, and to engage a friendly and active co-operation both at home and abroad.

The revised plan of the Society being now prepared, and having received the approbation of the Committee, a General Meeting of the subscribers and friends of the Institution was publicly advertised for Wednesday the 2d of May; and the Right Hon. Lord Teignmouth, whose name had appeared among the earliest in the list of contributors, was respectfully solicited, through his personal friend Zachary Macaulay, Esq., an active, judicious, and most useful Member of the Committee, to take the chair on that occasion. To this application his Lordship very promptly acceded: but ill-health compelling him to retract his engagement, Granville Sharp, Esq., the former chairman, was requested to repeat his services, in the same capacity; and with this request, however little congenial with his personal feelings, he kindly complied.

On the day appointed, the meeting was held, in the same room at the London Tavern in which the Society had been formed. Granville Sharp, Esq. presided, with his characteristic urbanity and attention. A Report was read, purporting that the Committee had been occupied in opening communications with various persons of influence in different parts of the United Kingdom, and of the Continent, for the purpose of obtaining

intelligence, augmenting the funds of the Society, and otherwise promoting its interests. The amended plan of the Society's regulations was then presented, and unanimously approved and adopted. The attendance and exertions of William Wilberforce, Esq. added much to the interest of the day. He addressed the meeting in a speech of equal animation and judgment While he encouraged the Members of the Society to proceed in their undertaking with an ardor becoming the object and the end, he cautioned them against precipitating their measures, and urged upon them the extreme importance of guarding against premature and ostentatious publicity. The observations of Mr. Wilberforce produced, as they are accustomed to do, a very sensible effect; and the meeting separated, with an increased conviction of the excellence of their cause, and a confirmed resolution to unite with their zeal in the prosecution of its interests that discretion which had been so opportunely and impressively recommended.

The constitution of the Society, as revised and amended, having thus received the sanction of the general body, preparation was now made for setting its powers in motion, and directing the machinery of which it consisted, to the objects upon which it was hereafter to be so actively employed. With this view, an early day was fixed upon for the first meeting of the Lay Com-

mittee, in order that it might be ascertained, with the least possible loss of time, on whom the Society might depend for engaging to conduct the practical business of the Institution. The result of this meeting was the definitive appointment of that Committee, from the individuals who had signified their acceptance of the nomination, and from such others as were proposed and approved, in the place of those who had declined. The following list will show who the parties were to whom the honor belongs of having served in the first Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society, after it had acquired a regular and permanent constitution.

William Alers, Esq.
T. Babington, Esq.
Thomas Bernard, Esq.
Joseph Benwell, Esq.
Wilson Birkbeck, Esq.
Henry Boase, Esq.
Joseph Bunnell, Esq.
J. Butterworth, Esq.
Robert Cowie, Esq.
Charles Crawford, Esq.
John Fenn, Esq.
Sebastian Fridag, Esq.
Charles Grant, Esq.
Claes Grill, Esq.
Joseph Hardcastle, Esq.
W. Henry Hoare, Esq.
Thomas Hodson, Esq.
John Daniel Hose, Esq.
Robert Howard, Esq.
R. Lea, Esq. Alderman.
Zachary Macaulay, Esq.
A. Maitland, Esq.
Ambrose Martin, Esq.
Samuel Mills, Esq.
Joseph Reyner, Esq.
H. Schroeder, Esq.
Granville Sharp, Esq.
R. Stainforth, Esq.
Joseph Smith, Esq.
James Stephen, Esq.
Robert Steven, Esq.
C. Sundius, Esq.
Anthony Wagner, Esq.
W. Wilberforce, Esq.
Joseph Wilson, Esq.
George Wolff, Esq.

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The practical machinery of the Society having been so far adjusted, its principles defined, its officers appointed, and its Committee determined, it now became necessary to devise means for rendering the Institution properly known; and by a fair exposition of its nature, its views, and its actual qualifications, to make way for its obtaining respectable patronage and competent support. With this view, a Prospectus was prepared; and directions were given, that it should be printed, and widely distributed. The Prospectus was as follows:

"BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

"A Society having been formed with the above designation, it has been judged expedient to submit to the public a brief statement of *the reasons* which exist for such a Society, of the specific *object* which it embraces, and of the *principles* by which its operations will be directed.

"The *reasons* which call for such an Institution, chiefly refer to the prevalence of ignorance, superstition, and idolatry, over so large a portion of the world; the limited nature of the respectable Societies now in existence, and their acknowledged insufficiency to supply the demand for Bibles in the United Kingdom and Foreign Countries; and the recent attempts which have been made on the part of infidelity to discredit the

evidence, vilify the character, and destroy the influence of Christianity.

" The exclusive *object* of this Society is, to diffuse the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, by circulating them in the different languages spoken throughout Great Britain and Ireland; and also, according to the extent of its funds, by promoting the printing of them in foreign languages, and the distribution of them in foreign countries.

" The *principles* upon which this undertaking will be conducted, are as comprehensive as the nature of the object suggests that they should be. In the execution of the plan, it is proposed to embrace the common support of Christians at large; and to invite the concurrence of persons of every description, who profess to regard the Scriptures as the proper Standard of Faith.

" It may be necessary to add, in soliciting the countenance of the public, that, in consequence of the enlarged means of instruction which the lower classes of this country have enjoyed of late years, a desire of perusing the Scriptures has considerably increased among them: and also that in Wales, Ireland, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, and other parts of the world, Bibles are greatly wanted, and in some are sought with an eagerness, which, but for authentic assurances to that effect, would scarcely be credited."

Before, however, this Prospectus had been

carried through the press, an event occurred, which, by giving to the Society a President, in the person of Lord Teignmouth, with whose name the reader is already acquainted, fitted it for appearing before the public with more propriety of character, and with a surer prospect of acceptance and effect.

An event of so great importance to the future interests of the Society requires to be distinctly accounted for and unfolded. The train of circumstances shall therefore be described, which led to the happy determination, by which the affairs of the Institution were placed under the supreme direction of a nobleman so peculiarly qualified in all respects to preside in its councils, guide its operations, and promote its success.

From the time when it was resolved to model the Society on a principle which might recommend it to general approbation, it became an object of serious attention with the Committee, to look out for such patronage as might shield their undertaking from the charge of insignificance, and stamp it with the recommendatory sanction of some high and honorable name. Various meetings were held in reference to this object, antecedently to the beginning of May; but from the unfinished state of the Society's plan, and the urgency of those measures which related to its completion, nothing decisive on the subject of patronage was, or indeed could be, concluded.

When, however, by the determination of the 2d of May, those difficulties were removed, and the Institution was considered as definitively constituted and accepted, a patron was felt to be the next desideratum in the order of its attainments; and that desideratum was, as we shall presently see, most seasonably and providentially supplied.

The Bishop of London having, agreeably to his custom, resumed about this time his residence at Fulham, the author had more frequent and easy opportunities of communicating with his Lordship on the Society's affairs, with the progress of which he had taken care to make his Lordship regularly acquainted, and in which the Bishop took a lively and increasing interest. On the morning of May the 14th, the author had an interview with his Lordship at the palace, previously to setting out in order to attend a meeting of the Committee, which had been summoned for that day. In the course of a long conversation relative to the state and the prospects of the Society, the author took occasion to express to his Lordship the anxiety which the Committee now felt to procure for the Institution a suitable patron. "Lord Teignmouth" (said the Bishop, with his characteristic quickness of manner) "is one of your Subscribers, and he would make you an excellent President." Availing himself of this happy suggestion from such a quarter,

the author proceeded to the Committee, which he found very numerously attended; and seized the earliest opportunity to propose,* that the Right Hon. Lord Teignmouth should be respectfully solicited to become the President of the Society. The individual on whom, by a happy contingency, the honor of making this proposition had devolved, possessed no other knowledge of this illustrious nobleman, than what he had derived from his Lordship's literary performance, as the Biographer of Sir William Jones, and his reputation as the patron of religion and an example of its influence while discharging the functions of Governor-General of Bengal. To few of the parties who composed that assembly, was his Lordship's character altogether unknown, and to some it was known in a degree which enabled them to bear testimony to its excellence, from intimacy and personal observation. Thus qualified in himself, and recommended by a Prelate whom good men of every persuasion agreed to love and revere, Lord Teignmouth was pronounced, by the unanimous judgment of the fullest Committee which had yet met together, worthy to preside

* The proposition was seconded by the Rev. Rowland Hill, A. M. who, after observing, that, in his opinion, Lord Teignmouth was in all respects a fit person to become the President of the Society, added, that as it was understood that the appointment was recommended by their excellent Diocesan, the Committee, he was sure, would agree with him, that it would be their duty to comply with his Lordship's recommendation.

over the British and Foreign Bible Society; and the author was instructed officially to request, in the name of the Committee, that his Lordship would be pleased to accept of the station. With this request his Lordship signified his ready compliance; and as his conduct in the Society has so fully redeemed the pledge which he gave, when he accepted the office assigned him, it may gratify the reader to see in what terms that acceptance was expressed.

"Sir, *Clapham, May* 16, 1804.

"I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday, informing me that the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society had done me the honor to nominate me the President of their Society.

"Concurring as I do most heartily in the views of the Society, I cannot hesitate a moment to accept the honor which the Committee have thought proper to confer upon me; in the determination to afford all the assistance in my power in promoting the important object of the Association.

"I beg leave to add my regret at being prevented by ill health from attending the meetings of the Committee.

"I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your most Obedient,
Humble Servant,
TEIGNMOUTH."

The Rev. J. Owen,
Secretary, &c.

On the 11th of June, Lord Teignmouth made his appearance in the Committee, and took his place for the first time in that chair which he regularly afterwards occupied, whenever indisposition or other unavoidable avocations did not prevent him, with equal advantage to the business of the Society, and satisfaction to all its conductors.

The crisis at which this appointment took place, rendered it particularly favorable to the interests of the infant Institution. As the Prospectus had not yet passed through the press, an opportunity was thereby afforded of sending it forth into the world under the auspices of a name which could not fail at once to accredit and to recommend it.

The organization of the Society was now advanced to a state of proficiency, which placed it within one degree only of systematic perfection. Nothing was wanted to meet the views and satisfy the wishes of its liberal conductors, but a decided recognition of it on the part of the Established Church, through the patronage of some of its Prelates. Nor was a consummation, so greatly desired by all parties in the Committee, much longer delayed. On the 15th of May, the day after Lord Teignmouth's nomination to the Presidency, the Bishops of London and Durham sent in their names as Subscribers of five guineas annually to the funds of the

Society; and before the close of the ensuing June, both these Prelates, together with the Bishops of Exeter (now Salisbury) and St. David's, accepted respectively the office of Vice-President. By the 27th of July this list was augmented with the names of Sir William Pepperell, Bart., Vice-Admiral (now Lord) Gambier, Charles Grant, Esq., and William Wilberforce, Esq.; and these, together with the late Henry Thornton, Esq., who had allowed his name to stand as Treasurer from the commencement of the Society, filled up those stations, which, next to that of the President, determined the character and fixed the respectability of the Institution.

It only remains to add a brief statement of what was done, in order to bring the laws and regulations to that form which they ultimately assumed, and in which they may be considered as exhibiting the perfection of the system.* It appears from the Minutes of the Society, that on the 11th of June a letter was read from the author of this History, prevented by indisposition from attendance, recommending a further revision of the laws. The matter being referred to a Sub-Committee, various alterations, retrench-

* This is to be understood as applying to the Parent Institution only, Auxiliary Societies, &c. not being a part of the original system, but having grown accidentally out of its operation.

ments, and additions, were suggested, which, after suitable discussion and amendment, were adopted. A little before the first Anniversary, an addition of the following clause, viz. "The only copies in the language of the United Kingdom to be circulated by the Society shall be the authorized version, without note or comment;" was made to the first regulation. This article, which only expressed what the framers of the Society had always intended, was adopted on the recommendation of the author, in consequence of a seasonable and judicious suggestion from the Bishop of London;* and it was rendered still more perspicuous and definite in 1811† by an

* In the Minutes of a Meeting held by the framers of the Society on the 8th of February, 1803, the following memorandum appears:

"That the translation of the Scriptures established by public authority be the only one in the English language to be adopted by the Society."

The omission of this article in the draught of the Society's rules must have been altogether an oversight; and the manner in which it was supplied, shows the advantage of that superintendence which the rulers of the Established Church have it in their power to exercise as patrons of the Institution.

† The amended rules are thus introduced in the Reports as respectively specified:

Extract from the First *Report,* (1805.)

"Your Committee, before they conclude their Report, recommend to the Society the revision of its regulations; suggesting some proposed additions and alterations, which appeared to them necessary. These will be duly noticed, when the regulations, in the form proposed, are submitted

alteration in the arrangement of the words. An article was added in 1807, authorizing the Committee to nominate such persons as had rendered essential services to the Society "Honorary Life Members;" and this power was, in 1808, enlarged to the nomination of "Honorary Life Governors." These changes, and the periods

to the consideration of the Society. And your Committee will only now point out an addition to the first article, in perfect conformity to the principle of the Society, and merely explanatory of its object. With the proposed addition, and a slight verbal alteration, the article stands thus:

'The designation of this Society shall be, "The British and Foreign Bible Society;" the sole object of which shall be, to encourage a wider circulation of the Holy Scriptures: the only copies in the languages of the United Kingdom to be circulated by the Society, shall be the authorized version, without note or comment.'"

Extract from the Seventh *Report*, (1811.)

"On a general view of the Society's transactions during the last year, your Committee are fully authorized to congratulate its Members on the increase of its influence and efficiency. The prosperity is, under God, to be attributed to the simplicity of its object, and the fidelity with which that object has been pursued, both at home and abroad. Anxious to secure the continuance of this conduct by every possible precaution, your Committee suggest the expediency of altering the arrangement of the words, 'without note or comment,' in the first article of the constitution, with a view to render it more perspicuous and explicit. The rule will then stand as follows:

'The designation of this Society to be "The British and Foreign Bible Society," of which the sole object shall be, to encourage a wider circulation of the Holy Scriptures without note or comment: the only copies in the languages of the United Kingdom to be circulated by the Society, shall be the authorized version.'"

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at which they were respectively made, are thus minutely recorded, in order that the reader may see the improvements progressively introduced by experience and observation: and the subject shall be closed by a view of the laws and regulations as finally determined in 1811; that being the state in which they may be considered (in the language before employed) as exhibiting the perfection of the system.

LAWS AND REGULATIONS

OF THE

BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

1. The Designation of this Society shall be The British and Foreign Bible Society, of which the sole object shall be, to encourage a wider circulation of the Holy Scriptures, without note or comment. The only Copies in the Languages of the United Kingdom to be circulated by the Society, shall be the authorized version.

2. This Society shall add its endeavours to those employed by other Societies, for circulating the Scriptures through the British Dominions; and shall also, according to its ability, extend its influence to other countries, whether Christian, Mahometan, or Pagan.

3. Each Subscriber of One Guinea annually, shall be a Member.

4. Each Subscriber of Ten Guineas at one time, shall be a Member for Life.

5. Each Subscriber of Five Guineas annually, shall be a Governor.

6. Each Subscriber of Fifty Pounds at one time, or who shall, by one additional payment, increase his original Subscription to Fifty Pounds, shall be a Governor for Life.

7. Governors shall be entitled to attend and vote at all Meetings of the Committee.

8. An Executor, paying a bequest of Fifty Pounds, shall be a Member for Life; or of One Hundred Pounds, a Governor for Life.

9. A Committee shall be appointed to conduct the business of the Society, consisting of Thirty-six Laymen, Six of whom shall be Foreigners, resident in London or its vicinity, half the remainder shall be Members of the Church of England, and the other half Members of other denominations of Christians. Twenty-seven of the above

number, who shall have most frequently attended, shall be eligible for re-election for the ensuing year.

The Committee shall appoint all Officers, except the Treasurer, and call special General Meetings, and shall be charged with procuring for the Society suitable patronage, both British and Foreign.

10. Each Member of the Society shall be entitled, under the direction of the Committee, to purchase Bibles and Testaments at the Society's prices, which shall be as low as possible.

11. The Annual Meeting of the Society shall be held on the First Wednesday in May, when the Treasurer and Committee shall be chosen, the Accounts presented, and the Proceedings of the foregoing year reported.

12. The President, Vice-Presidents, and Treasurer, shall be considered, *ex officio*, Members of the Committee.

13. Every Clergyman or Dissenting Minister who is a Member of the Society, shall be entitled to attend and vote at all Meetings of the Committee.

14. The Secretaries, for the time being, shall be considered as Members of the Committee; but no person deriving any emolument from the Society shall have that privilege.

15. At the General Meetings, and Meetings of the Committee, the President, or in his absence the Vice-President first upon the list, then present; and in the absence of all the Vice-Presidents, the Treasurer, and in his absence, such Member as shall be voted for that purpose, shall preside at the Meeting.

16. The Committee shall meet on the First Monday in every Month, or oftener if necessary.

17. The Committee shall have the power of nominating such persons as have rendered essential services to this Institution, either Members for Life, or Governors for Life.

18. The Committee shall also have the power of nominating Honorary Members from among Foreigners who have promoted the objects of this Society.

19. The whole of the Minutes of every General Meeting shall be signed by the Chairman.

Such was the origin of the British and Foreign Bible Society; and such were the principal steps by which it was trained, from its elementary existence in a crude suggestion and in unpromising obscurity, to the ripeness of its plan in a well-digested system, an organized establishment, and a regular and dignified patronage.

In carrying the mind back through the several transactions and occurrences which have been described, and surveying them attentively, both in their details and their combination, we cannot overlook the extraordinary, and, (may we not add?) providential train of circumstances, which gave birth to the original design of the Institution;—nurtured it in secret, till it was ripe for publicity;—and finally brought together, by seeming casualty, and against many improbabilities, those whose joint agency was required to adjust the balance of its constitution, and to connect it with such personages of distinction, both Lay and Ecclesiastical, as were competent to give it character and consequence in the world.

But while we refer, as becomes us, the first tribute of our praise to Him, "from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed," we cannot overlook what is due to the excellent and truly-disinterested individuals with whom the Society originated, and to whose fostering care and catholic spirit it owes so great obligations.

It will scarcely have escaped the observation

of the reader, how studiously the modest author of the first suggestion, and those who shared with him in preparing the original draught of the Institution, avoided every thing which could be construed into an exhibition of themselves, and an assertion of that influence to which they might have advanced unquestionable pretensions. Resigning the foreground of the Society to those, whom they thought most likely to advance its general interests, they contentedly occupied less conspicuous stations; and seemed to think themselves sufficiently honored by the privilege of laboring in its service, and recompensed by the satisfaction of witnessing its success.

That the conduct of those in whose hands the Society was originally found, deserved this commendation, must have appeared in a great measure from the facts recorded in the preceding narrative. To their generous forbearance and liberal policy it is to be ascribed, that the Institution put on, from its earliest appearance before the public, an aspect which favored the pre-eminence of the Established Church: and they who think to discredit the Institution by charging it with a *Dissenting origin*, may be reminded, that, whatever may have been the case with respect to its rudiments, a *Member of the Established Church presided at the formation of the Society, and a Minister of that Church moved the Resolutions by which it was formed.* Seven twelfths

of the Committee were soon after assigned to the Church of England and Foreign Churches; five only being left for the Members of the Church of Scotland, and the numerous classes of Dissenters, Methodists, &c. which exist throughout the United Kingdom. When to this is added the appointment of a President, Vice-Presidents, and Treasurer, from the Established Church exclusively, it seems scarcely necessary to say any thing further, in order to vindicate the character of the Institution, or to evince the candor of those from whom it proceeded. But as it is the first duty of an Historian to be just; and as it is due to the individuals to whom the author has referred as the framers of the Society, that nothing should be concealed which can place their conduct in a proper light, a circumstance shall be stated which will, he thinks, be considered not a little to strengthen the foregoing representation.

Shortly after the appointment of the Vice-Presidents on the 27th of July, it occurred to the liberal mind of Lord Teignmouth, that it would be but equitable, to propose to those Members of the Committee who were not of the communion of the Established Church, to add to the list two names from among their own religious connections. "There is" (said his Lordship, in his letter to the author on that occasion) "in my idea so much propriety in this, that I recommend it to your consideration." Entirely concurring

with the views of the President, the author carried his Lordship's proposal to those gentlemen who were supposed to possess the sentiments of the respective denominations of which that division of the Committee was composed; and they severally declined availing themselves of it. The Wesleyan Methodists assigned as their ground of refusal, that they considered themselves represented by the Bishops; the Quakers pleaded their averseness to distinction; and the other classes of Dissenters expressed their unwillingness to interfere, in a manner equally creditable to their humility and their candor. The determination of these last was conveyed through Joseph Reyner, Esq.; and there is, in the conclusion of the letter which contained it, such a spirit of Christian simplicity, as to give it a claim to insertion.

" I therefore recommend that this choice should remain with whom it was left; and shall (as I am sure, our other friends will) cheerfully concur in this. If I fear at all for this invaluable object, it is lest we should be looking more to man than to Him whose cause, whose word it is—who alone can open the hearts of men, to give of that which He has given them."

Having introduced the name of Mr. Reyner, the author cannot dismiss it without expressing, how greatly the formation of the Society was promoted by his warm and generous encourage-

ment. Animated at all times by a zeal for religion which elevates him above the consideration of ordinary obstacles, he cheered the thought of a Bible Society, from the moment when it was first suggested. He exhorted his coadjutors to advance, when nothing but difficulties appeared in the way; and inspired into their minds, as often as they seemed inclined to despond or to languish, a portion of that living energy which so remarkably characterizes his own. From the zeal and perseverance of Mr. Reyner the Society has derived much of that vigor which has carried it forward in pursuit of its object; and enabled it to realize, in so great a measure, the wishes of a heart which desires the welfare of all mankind.

Among the instrumental causes by which the Institution was planned, and brought to maturity, the character of the principal agents themselves, and their different circumstances and connections, are deserving of particular attention.

In the Rev. Mr. Hughes, the individual by whom the design was suggested, and who may therefore be regarded as the primary agent, we recognize, not a furious zealot, or an aspiring sectary; but a man of sedate piety, and conscientious moderation: with sufficient warmth to pursue his object, and with temper to qualify the eagerness of pursuit by the necessary restraints of judgment and discretion.

In Granville Sharp, Esq. who presided at the Society's formation, the cause obtained a temporary patron, in whom the members of the Establishment acknowledged a true churchman, and real Christians of every denomination, a friend and a brother. Perhaps it would not have been possible to find throughout the British dominions a man in whom the qualities requisite for the first Chairman of the British and Foreign Bible Society were so completely united as they were in this venerable philanthropist. A churchman in faith, in charity a universalist, he stamped upon the Institution, while it was yet tender, those characters which suited its constitution and its end; and while he made it respected by the sanction of his name, he improved it by the influence of his example.

In the Rev. Mr. Steinkopff the Institution acquired a medium of easy, reputable, and efficient communication with Christians of almost every description on the Continent of Europe. Simple, modest, and laborious; combining extraordinary judgment with the most exalted piety, and trained for service by an experience of several years as Secretary to a Religious Society at Bâsle, Mr. Steinkopff possessed those various qualifications for correspondence, for translation, and for general duties, which rendered his appointment to the Foreign Secretaryship, however accidental and unpremeditated, a measure of the

soundest wisdom, and of the greatest advantage to the interests of the Institution.

In another material agent, the Rev. Josiah Pratt, may be seen a continuation of what has been observed in that superintending wisdom which brought together those who were qualified for the respective parts they were severally intended to perform. The sagacity of Mr. Pratt enabled him to devise, and his perseverance to execute, a measure which prepared the way for the last agent in the confederation, the writer of this History, to introduce the Society with acceptance to Bishop Porteus, and thereby to accomplish the grand object of its projectors and managers—its decided connection with the Established Church.

On the whole, when we reflect upon the humble original from which this vast fabric arose; when we advert to the comparative insignificance of the individuals on whom it devolved to lay its foundation, and to carry up its superstructure, till it attained the strength, capaciousness, and symmetry, which adapted it to the uses for which it was designed, we seem to discern that visible disproportion between the means and the end, which characterizes all the great dispensations of the Almighty, and discriminates them from the ordinary operations of His Providence, and still more from the achievements of human counsel and might. In this view of the subject, the language

of the Apostle on a higher, but not dissimilar occasion, may furnish us with a proper conclusion.

" God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence:" but, " that, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."*

* 1 Cor. i. 27, 28.

CHAPTER II.

1804—5.

PART I. CHAP. II. 1804-5.

HAVING explained the origin of the Society, and described the steps by which it acquired a definitive constitution, and a recognition of its merits from persons of distinction both Lay and Ecclesiastical, the author will now enter upon the recital of those proceedings, both domestic and foreign, which compose the proper materials of its history.

The Society having been nominally formed on the 7th of March, 1804, the first Committee, as miscellaneously chosen, assembled on the ensuing 12th, at the London Tavern, to the number of twenty-four. With a general resolution to hold periodical meetings, at least on the first Monday in the month, they determined, for the present, to repeat them weekly; a practice to which they continued to adhere without variation, till the Society was completely organized, and its business brought into a regular train. Subsequently however to that period, and even down to the present time, the meetings, under a stated appointment for the first Monday in the month,

have been multiplied by frequent and necessary adjournments: and perhaps there never was an Institution which has exacted from its Committees a larger tribute of time and attention and personal labor, or in which the exacted tribute has been more cheerfully and even zealously paid.

The first proceeding resorted to, with a view to the execution of the Society's design, was, the appointment of different Sub-Committees, for the several departments of its practical business. These subordinate Committees began their operations with great spirit in the month of March; and although their composition underwent certain changes, after the new organization of the General Committee on the 2d of May, yet, as their designation remained the same, it will be expedient to treat them as identical throughout, in order that the course of their measures may not be interrupted by the relation of minor and unimportant occurrences.

Three considerations appear, in this early stage of their existence, to have occupied the principal solicitude and attention of the Committee; the care of the Society's funds, the improvement of its general interests, and the prosecution of inquiries directed to the accomplishment of its object—the circulation of the Scriptures.

The first of these duties, the care of the funds, was consigned to the administration of Samuel

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Mills, Robert Howard, and Joseph Reyner, Esqrs. in the capacity of a Sub-Committee of Finance; and so entirely has the confidence reposed in these disinterested Stewards been justified by the experience of their prudence and fidelity, that (with the exception of the second, removed by death in 1812, and succeeded by a son, the inheritor of his virtues) they have continued invariably, by annual re-election, to manage that important trust, to the great security and advantage of the Institution.

The improvement of the Society's general interests was confided to a Sub-Committee, consisting of individuals, as well Members of the Committee by privilege as by election, who, from their station, or their connection, were best qualified to promote the extension of its influence, and the eventual increase of its patronage and support.

The prosecution of inquiries with reference to the circulation of the Scriptures, devolved upon a few; and it was in this department chiefly that the services of the Secretaries were called into exercise during the earlier stages of their connection with the Institution. The particular occurrences within this department will require to be specifically related.

The first subject to which it was judged proper to direct the inquiries of this Sub-Committee, was, the most ready and effectual means of obtaining

a regular and competent supply of the Holy Scriptures in the English, Welsh, and Irish languages. A resolution to this purport was adopted on the 9th of April, 1804; and it was on the same occasion determined, that a foreign correspondence should be immediately commenced, in order to the promotion of the Society's object abroad. By virtue of this latter determination, the execution of which was committed to the Rev. Mr. Steinkopff and the author, assisted by a Swedish merchant of good connections and warm attachment to the Institution, Christopher Sundius, Esq., steps were taken, without delay, for concerting a plan of amicable and effective communication with foreign countries. While thus occupied, an incident occurred which drew the attention of the Committee to the consideration of China; and as the measures which it suggested, though productive of no immediate good effects, form the earliest link in that chain of operations which has since been extended through so many regions of the East, a brief account of the circumstance itself, and of the proceedings adopted in consequence of it, may not be unacceptable to the reader.

On the 5th of April, Dr. Antonio Montucci, who, in the Gentleman's Magazine for October and November 1801, had published an account of the Chinese manuscript* of the New Testa-

* The MS. above referred to is No. 3,599 of the Sloanian Collection in the British Museum. The MS. contains, a

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ment in the British Museum, addressed a letter to the Rev. Mr. Hughes, offering his service to the newly-formed Society, as editor, should it be thought expedient to print the MS.; and earnestly recommending the publication of it, "for the benefit of 300 millions of people." A short time previously, the Rev. W. Mosely had circulated a Memoir on the state of Religion in China, and urged the importance and practicability of a serious attempt to propagate Christianity through that vast, but neglected empire. With this Memoir most of those who constituted the active Members of the Committee were sufficiently acquainted; and their minds were therefore to a certain degree prepared for such

Harmony of the Four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and all St. Paul's Epistles, excepting that to the Hebrews, the first chapter of which only is included. It is written partly on European, and partly on Chinese paper, and has the defective title of "Evangelia Quatuor Sinice," the Four Gospels in Chinese.

The Directors of the Missionary Society, speaking of the Rev. Mr. Morrison, the Chinese Translator at Canton, (in their Report for 1810,) give the following testimony to the value of the MS. in question.

"It has proved of great advantage to him, that he copied and carried out with him the Chinese translation of the Gospels preserved in the British Museum, which he now finds, from his own increasing acquaintance with the language, and the opinion of the Chinese assistants, to be exceedingly valuable; and which must, from the excellency of the style, have been produced by Chinese natives."

a proposition as that which Dr. Montucci had made. It was also ascertained, that Sir George Staunton, whose knowledge of the Chinese language had gained him so high reputation, was at that time in London, and on the point of embarkation for China. Much, it was thought, might be derived from his present advice, and still more from his future inquiries, to guide the Committee through the labyrinth of a question not less intricate than important. The concurrence of these and other favorable circumstances determined the Committee to open a correspondence with Dr. Montucci, the Rev. Mr. Mosely, and Sir George Staunton; together with Dr. Hagar, at that time in Paris, and S. Hollingsworth, Esq.: the former of whom was well known to the public in connection with no light pretensions to Chinese Literature; and the latter to certain Members of the Committee, as a gentleman, who, in consequence of having visited China four several times, was deemed very conversant with the state of that country.

Much information was elicited through this correspondence, not only on the nature and qualities of the MS., but also on the religious condition of China, and the practicability of introducing Christianity into it, by translating and printing the Scriptures for the use of the natives.

The reply of Sir George Staunton placed the subject under investigation in so clear a light, and

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evinced on his part so much industry, candor, and readiness to promote the design of the Society, that no apology will be required for its insertion.

From Sir George Thomas Staunton, Bart. to the Rev. John Owen.

" Sir, *April* 25, 1804.

" I was favored with your letter a few days ago, and although I had formerly seen the manuscript in question, I took the first opportunity of going again to the British Museum, in order to give the most satisfactory answer in my power to your inquiries.

" It appeared to me, as far as I could judge without very minute examination, to be a pure translation, unmixed with extraneous matter, of the chief part of the New Testament: and I have no hesitation in saying, that I feel disposed to regard it as one of the most accurate and elegant translations I ever met with from any European language into the Chinese character; and being probably unique in this country, its value is proportionably enhanced by that circumstance. From the style and wording of the manuscript, I should infer that it is a translation from the Vulgate, made under the direction of the Jesuits.

" With regard to the extent to which Dr. Montucci may have made himself acquainted with the Chinese language, I certainly cannot pretend to decide; but I am persuaded that the general knowledge he possesses of the theory of the language, together with the neatness and accuracy with which he is accustomed to execute the Chinese characters, fully qualifies him for the task of publishing the manuscript in a very correct and satisfactory manner.

" I have thus unreservedly communicated to you my opinion on this subject, according to the best of my judgment, and shall be very glad if it should tend at all to promote the laudable object of your researches."

(Signed) G. T. STAUNTON.

The sentiments expressed by Mr. Hollingsworth on the expediency of the proposed attempt, are also not undeserving of notice. They appear in the following passages, with which Mr. Hollingsworth concluded a very intelligent and interesting communication.

" The introduction of the Sacred Scriptures, clothed in the language of China, appears to be by far the most rational plan that has been, or can be, attempted, to scatter the good seed, and prepare the inquiring mind for the reception of the blessed Gospel throughout this great em-

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pire. One of the favorite maxims of Confucius is, *The perfection of wisdom is to explore all things.*

" This maxim is opposed by the government in all matters, nearly, which foreigners are supposed capable or desirous of introducing. And how far its opposition might or might not extend to the introduction of the New Testament, is an object of serious consideration. Perhaps the Committee will see the propriety of having something printed with the intended work, as an explanatory preface of the doctrines it contains, the morality it enjoins, and the peaceable fruits of righteousness it is so well calculated to produce; if such an introduction can be obtained from persons in London sufficiently acquainted with the Chinese language. It appears to me highly necessary, under the present proscribed situation of the Christian name in China, that something of this kind should, if possible, be attempted. And I think there can be no doubt, that if the religion of our blessed Redeemer, as taught by the New Testament, was generally understood in that great empire, it would not only produce the greatest effects, but experience much less opposition than in any other shape; and particularly than when coming in so questionable a one as it has done through the mouths of the Jesuits. Were the Emperor, his Ministers, and the other great Mandarines, fully convinced, that Chris-

tianity, properly so called, has no connection with politics; that Christ's kingdom is not of this world; and that the faith and morals of the Gospel make men wiser, happier, and better, than either human laws or systems of philosophy can ever do; it can hardly be questioned, but that they would allow it to spread uncontrolled, and take deep root in the empire, instead of confounding it with Popery, to which they have conceived so excusable an aversion."

The train of inquiry thus auspiciously opened, was studiously followed up by the Committee, under the influence of that encouragement which, though partial, was yet sufficient to keep expectation alive, and to make it appear their duty to proceed.

At length the testimony of Mr. Chaumont, (an accomplished Chinese scholar,) to the character of the manuscript having been collated with that of Sir George Staunton, and Dr. Montucci,* and every thing having been done which prudence could suggest, and research contribute, to ascertain its intrinsical value; an estimate was

* It is due to the Rev. Archdeacon Nares, (at that time one of the Librarians of the British Museum,) to relate, that, upon being addressed by the author, at the instance of the Committee, he replied, with the greatest promptitude and kindness, that "leave would very readily be given by the Trustees of the British Museum to take a copy of the Chinese MS. of the New Testament; and that he would be happy to aid the application."

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obtained of the probable expense of printing 1000 copies: and it was computed, that each copy bound would cost the Society about two guineas. On this calculation therefore, united with an apprehension of the uncertain issue of the experiment, it was deemed expedient to decline, under present circumstances, any further prosecution of the matter. This final decision took place on the 23d of July, after an investigation conscientiously and indefatigably pursued for more than three months. The wisdom of the decision, which suspended, rather than dismissed, the consideration of the subject, will best appear from the terms in which the Minute recording it is expressed.

"Considering the expense of the undertaking, and the desirableness of obtaining still further evidence relative to the contents of the manuscript, and of committing the circulation to the care of persons acquainted with the Chinese language, and of undoubted religious character, the Committee recommend that the Society do not at present proceed to the editing or the transcribing of the manuscript; but that they carefully preserve the information already obtained, and encourage their friends to communicate from time to time such particulars as may come before them relative to the object."

Thus ended this attempt to provide, in the metropolis of the British dominions, an edition

of some portion of the Christian Scriptures in their vernacular tongue, for the inhabitants of the populous and benighted empire of China. The parties with whom it originated, were not hastily diverted from their purpose. When compelled to renounce it, they did not yield to the necessity without much reluctance; nor, as it has appeared, without a recorded determination to keep it in mind, under the hope of being able, at some future period, to resume it with a better prospect of success. That period, in due time, arrived; and it seems to have been wisely permitted, that the undertaking should fail in London, in order that it might be accomplished, by aid derived from the same source, in the more advantageous situations of Serampore and Canton.

When the subject of the Chinese MS. had begun to excite serious attention, it was felt to be desirable, that a Sub-Committee should be expressly appointed, to whom a business of such magnitude and importance might be formally confided. In this determination originated that Sub-Committee, which, at first denominated *the China*, and afterwards more generally the *Oriental* Sub-Committee, has continued ever since to exist, by annual re-appointment; and has greatly contributed to the order and efficiency of the Society's labors in the various ramifications of its Eastern department.

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The primary, and, it may be added, the favorite object of this Sub-Committee having, for the reasons assigned, been deliberately abandoned, the purposes of its formation seemed to its Members to require, that their attention should be turned to some other portion of the oriental field, more easily accessible, and affording greater present encouragement, than that which they had been induced to renounce. British India appeared, on every account, to be the most proper quarter, to which efforts, such as those which it was the duty of the Society to make, could be directed; and the known disposition of some of the East India Company's servants at Calcutta, and of the Baptist Missionaries at Serampore, afforded, in their estimation, sufficient encouragement to warrant the attempt.

No sooner then had the affair of the Chinese manuscript been finally disposed of, than it was resolved to "open a correspondence with gentlemen in India, informing them of the establishment of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and requesting their communications respecting the best means of promoting the objects of the Institution with regard to the Eastern languages." In selecting the individuals who should be invited to become correspondents, the Committee had respect to the principle embodied in their Society, that of uniting the different denominations of Christians in the prosecution of the

same common design. The Baptist Missionaries* at Serampore had made a hopeful beginning in the translation of the Scriptures into the native languages of the East: it was considered as likely to conduce both to the progress and the improvement of the work of translation, if the vernacular knowledge and zealous assiduity of these humble, and at that time, unaccredited laborers, could be associated with the sound erudition and the personal influence of certain Members of the Established Church, on whose piety and zeal for the promotion of Christianity dependance might confidently be placed. With these views it was determined, "That the following gentlemen be requested to form themselves into a Committee of Correspondence with this Society, viz.: George Udney, Esq., Member of Council; the Rev. Messrs. Brown, Buchanan, Carey, Ward, and Marshman; and that they be desired to associate with themselves such other gentlemen in any part of India as they may think proper." This resolution the author transmitted officially to Calcutta, by the earliest conveyance. It was passed on the 23d of July, 1804; and

* The Baptist Missionaries entered India in 1793; and, not being permitted to reside in the Company's territories, fixed themselves in the Danish settlement at Serampore, Calcutta. "To this Mission" (says Dr. Buchanan) "chiefly belongs the honor of reviving the spirit for promoting Christian Knowledge by translations of the Holy Scriptures." See Buchanan's Researches, p. 85.

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though its operation in India was slow, and interrupted by many vicissitudes of discouragement and delay, it proved the germ of those Institutions at Calcutta, Bombay, Colombo, Batavia, &c. which are now engaged, with so much energy and concord, in promoting the dispersion of the Scriptures in their respective dialects among both the Christian and the Heathen population of the East.

With these active researches into matters which related to the languages and the inhabitants of China and of India, was combined another class of similar exertions, having for its object the arrangement of a plan for introducing the operations of the Society with regularity and effect on the continent of Europe.

As early as the 16th of April, a report appears upon the Society's records, to which the name of the author is subscribed as chairman,* recommending "that measures be immediately taken for procuring more precise information, (than had yet been obtained,) on the extent to which Bibles are wanted and sought for, in Switzerland, Germany, and Denmark, as well as in other parts of the continent." The report goes on to specify certain persons of influence, to whom it is considered desirable that application should be made, with a view to obtain the desired intelligence.

* The author had not at that time accepted the office of Secretary.

The individuals enumerated were, Mr. Tobias Kiesling, a merchant of known piety and philanthropy in Nurenberg; the Rev. Dr. Knapp, Director of the Orphan House and Canstein Bible Institution at Halle in Saxony; Professor Druck, Librarian to the Elector (now King) of Würtemberg; the Rev. Dr. Hertzog, first Professor of Divinity and Librarian at Bâsle in Switzerland; and the Right Rev. Bishop Ball, at Copenhagen. To these were added, in a sequel to this report, presented at a subsequent meeting, the following individuals and societies, viz.: Professor Young, of Heidelberg; the Rev. J. J. Hesse, the Antistes (or Superior) of the Zurich Clergy; the Rev. Messrs. Wyttenbach, Falkheisen, and Hüber, Clergymen of distinguished character in some of the principal towns of Switzerland; the Bâsle Religious Society, (of which Mr. Steinkopff had formerly been Secretary;) and the Fühnen Society, in Denmark, having for its professed object "to extend the influence of pure and vital Christianity by the dispersion of Religious Tracts in Denmark and Norway." Such were the parties selected, in the very dawn of the Institution, as channels of communication with the European continent; and it has been presumed, that the reader would be gratified by seeing them distinctly enumerated, as he will hereafter find them connected, in a greater or less degree, with the most active and successful

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of the Society's proceedings in that division of the world.

It was also at this early period (April 16th) that the design was conceived of holding out encouragement to the formation of Bible Societies, in preference to granting immediate relief by limited and merely temporary supplies. This rule of procedure, so wise in its principle, and in practice at once so successful and productive, arose, as almost every thing that is wise and efficient in the practical departments of the Institution has done, out of accidental and extemporaneous discussion. In the report, of which an account has already been given, a recommendation was inserted, that, in consideration of the want of Bibles, represented by Mr. Kiesling*, as existing in Austria, the sum of 100*l.* should be transmitted to that correspondent, as well to furnish him with the means of relieving the present wants of the Austrians, as to give him a pledge of the Society's zeal and sincerity in the cause for which his good offices were solicited. The recommendation was discussed with the seriousness due to the importance of a proposition which involved the first pecuniary grant; and the result of the discussion was an unanimous determination to acquaint Mr. Kiesling, that, should he procure the formation of a society in

* Mr. Kiesling had addressed various letters previously to the date of the report referred to.

Germany to promote a continued circulation of the Holy Scriptures, the British and Foreign Bible Society would present the sum of 100*l.* in aid of such an Institution. This conditional encouragement was accordingly transmitted to Nurenberg, and, as we shall soon have occasion to see, produced the desired effect.

Nor did these proceedings, in reference to the circulation of the Scriptures in foreign parts, interfere with, or obstruct, those which had relation to the primary object of the Institution—the supply of our domestic population. The latter, in fact, commenced at the same period with the former; and both, as equally parts of the general design, were simultaneously prosecuted, with equal zeal, assiduity, and perseverance.

In coincidence with those inquiries which regarded the best means of obtaining a supply of the Scriptures in the English, Welsh, and Irish languages, a circumstance occurred, which, both from its seasonableness and utility, deserves to be distinctly and gratefully commemorated.

Early in this year, Mr. Andrew Wilson commenced a negociation with the University of Cambridge, for the introduction of his improved mode of printing Bibles and Testaments by the employment of stereotype plates. This art, though partially known many years before, had been advanced considerably towards perfection by the united ingenuity and perseverance of Earl

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Stanhope and Mr. Wilson; and to the latter belongs the praise of having brought it into general notice, and qualified it for being advantageously employed in printing the Holy Scriptures. Mr. Wilson's negociation with the University of Cambridge was brought to a favorable issue; and the Syndics of the Press had concluded to adopt his process for printing Bibles and Testaments, at the very period in which inquiries were making into the best mode of obtaining supplies of both in the languages of the United Kingdom. To the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the plan of printing the Scriptures by stereotype appeared to offer so many and important advantages, by furnishing the means of a regular and permanent supply of copies; by perpetuating a correct and standard Text, and favoring its general propagation through the country; and, finally, as the plates were cast from new types, and an expectation was excited of a material reduction in the price, it was judged expedient to give it the decided countenance of the Institution, and to stipulate for engagements to such an amount as might encourage the prompt and complete adoption of the system. Under this conviction, after the result of very extended inquiries had been maturely considered, a resolution was passed, that a number of Bibles and Testaments in stereotype, should be immediately

ordered, and among that number, 20,000 Welsh Bibles in 12mo. and 5,000 additional Testaments in a larger type. This measure was determined upon at a meeting on the 3d of September, 1804, and the determination was notified to the University of Cambridge without delay. The reader will have pleasure in observing, with how great alacrity, and in how early a stage of its transactions, the Society proceeded to the execution of that purpose in which its establishment had originated —the printing of the Welsh Scriptures: nor will he observe with less satisfaction the advantageous manner in which this object was promoted, by the contemporaneous introduction of that mode of printing which has been found so powerful an auxiliary in the accomplishment of the Society's general designs.

While these inquiries were thus systematically pursuing, with a view to the commencement of practical operations both at home and abroad, exertions were made, with no less method and industry, to extend the foundation of the Institution, and to associate with it whatever could be likely to consolidate its strength, facilitate its proceedings, and augment its respectability and influence in the world.

Notice has been taken of the measures which were pursued to make known the existence and the object of the Society, down to that period,

when, by the accession of the Prelates and distinguished Commoners as Vice-Presidents, its constitution was regarded as having attained its completion. To these were now added certain measures, concerted on a higher scale, and comporting better with the state of vigorous growth, and increased consideration, at which, by this time, the Institution had arrived.

The first of these, was a determination, formed on the 23d of July, when the list of Vice-Presidents already referred to had been announced, to address the two great Religious Societies in London and Dublin, denominated respectively "the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge," and "the Association for Discountenancing Vice, and Promoting the Knowledge and Practice of the Christian Religion." This communication, which had for its object to acquaint those respectable bodies with the establishment and the views of the British and Foreign Bible Society, was proposed in the spirit of that clause in the second law of its constitution, which states, that "the Society shall add its endeavours to those employed by other Societies, for circulating the Scriptures through the British dominions;" and the terms in which the communication was made, will show, that the Conductors of the Society acted strictly under the influence of those regulations by which they professed to be governed.

The letters, addressed and subscribed by the President, who filled the chair when the resolution was passed, were severally as follows.

To the Rev. Dr. Gaskin, Secretary to "The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge."

"Sir, *Clapham, August* 24, 1804.

"By desire of the Committee of 'The British and Foreign Bible Society,' I have the honor to transmit to you a plan of this Institution, for the information of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. I have further the pleasure to add, that the communication is dictated by that respect and esteem which the Committee cannot but feel for a Society which has so long and successfully exerted itself in disseminating the knowledge of divine truth.

"I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your most Obedient,
Humble Servant,
TEIGNMOUTH,
Chairman."

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To the Rev. Dr. Guinness, of Trinity College, Dublin; Secretary to "The Association for Discountenancing Vice, and Promoting the Knowledge and Practice of the Christian Religion."

"Sir, *London, August* 24, 1804.

"By desire of the Committee of 'The British and Foreign Bible Society,' I have the honor to transmit to you a plan of this Institution, for the information of the Association for Discountenancing Vice, and Promoting the Knowledge and Practice of the Christian Religion. I have further the pleasure to add, that this address is dictated by esteem for a Society founded on the same principles with that of which I have the honor to be President, and to express a hope that it may eventually prove introductory to communications by which the mutual object of both Societies may be promoted.

"I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your most obedient Servant,
TEIGNMOUTH,
Chairman."

From the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, no reply was received. From the Dublin Association, a respectful and friendly acknowledgment was transmitted in return, *by order of the Board.* In this letter of acknowledgment, the Board describes the Address of the British and Foreign Bible Society to be an "acceptable communication," cheerfully embraces the assistance which it proffers, and expresses the demand for the Scriptures among the Irish, as great, daily increasing, and exceeding the means of the Association to supply it. The words of the Board, in stating this fact, are strong and explicit: "The Bibles are bought up with great avidity in this country, at the reduced rate of 4*s.* 6*d.*, at which the Association affords them to the public: and the demand for them daily increases so much, that *the Funds of the Association are unable to supply it.*"

Another measure directed to the enlargement of the Society's connections and its more complete introduction to notoriety and usefulness, was that of addressing the Parochial Clergy, Dissenting Ministers, and other respectable persons individually, as far as might be practicable, throughout the United Kingdom. For this purpose, a Circular, containing a plan of the Institution, Extracts of Correspondence, and a List of Subscribers, was prepared; and very extensively distributed, free of expense to the receiver, through

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the medium of the post. An Address was prefixed to it, of which the following is a copy.

" The Society, which now takes the liberty to address you, founds its claims to your notice, upon the nature of its object,—to promote the circulation of the Scriptures at home and abroad; an object, in which every one, who professes the religion of Christ, must feel a deep interest.

" The liberal basis of its establishment, also, which unites, to a degree perhaps hitherto unexampled, the zeal and exertions of Christians, of the several denominations, to which the constitution of this happy country affords equal protection, will doubtless give additional force to the claims arising from the simplicity, purity, and importance of its design.

" It cannot be doubted, that in every part of the United Kingdom, there are many who are actuated with the true spirit of Christian benevolence, and who only want proper opportunities of manifesting it. The British and Foreign Bible Society now presents such an opportunity to them, and solicits your assistance in making it known, as well as your influence and co-operation in promoting the object of its association.

" The Society is fully sensible of the happy results to be expected from the combined exertions of the Christian community, and is required by a

sense of duty to call them forth in the advancement of a work which it can with confidence recommend to the blessing of God, and the support of every good man.

"I have the honor to be,

Your most obedient, humble Servant,

TEIGNMOUTH,

President."

The measures, emanating from the directing body in their collective capacity, were greatly assisted by the zeal and activity of its individual Members; and the united operation of both contributed materially to increase the funds of the Society, and to multiply the number of those who took an interest in its advancement and success.

In the mean time, the correspondence which had been opened with different parts of the European continent began to elicit information upon the subject to which it was directed, and in some cases to import the most gratifying assurances of approbation, and of a cordial disposition to co-operate in promoting the design of the Institution as it regarded foreign countries.

The communication which had taken place with certain individuals of piety and influence in the Imperial city of Nurenberg, led (as has been stated) to the proposition of granting a donation of 100*l.* from the British and Foreign

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Bible Society, in the event of a similar Institution being founded in that place. The result of this proposition was, the establishment of the first Foreign Bible Society. The foundation of it was laid on the 10th of May, 1804; and the pious simplicity of the correspondent on whom it devolved to take the lead in the transaction, gives a pleasing interest to the following statement of the manner in which it was effected: "We cannot but return you our most humble thanks, for having encouraged us in the most liberal manner to co-operate with you in this excellent work of love. While reading your kind invitation and offer, I was deeply impressed with that Scripture: 'They beckoned to their partners which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them; and they came and filled both ships, so that they began to sink.' Your letter afforded me so much joy, that I could not contain myself, but immediately went to the Rev. John Godfried Schœner, one of the most respectable Ministers of our city, in order to communicate to him the joyful news from a far country. He was no less affected than myself; and we agreed to appoint a meeting of Christian friends on Ascension Day, at which we unanimously resolved to unite for the formation of a Bible Society, and by a printed letter to invite our Christian friends throughout Germany and Switzerland, to assist us in so noble an under-

taking." This Address was soon after issued; and while the generosity of England was warmly commended, and held up as an example, an animated appeal was made to the reverers of the Bible, "which yet remains the Bible of all religious parties," to lend their aid in promoting its distribution. "The inherent value of the book, the religious wants of the people, the critical circumstances of the times, the present tranquillity of the states," together with other cogent reasons, were seriously urged, as "loudly calling for attention to this important undertaking."

From Stuttgart, Professor Druck, Librarian to the Elector (now King) of Würtemberg, in reply to the letter in which he had been addressed, transmitted important intelligence, relative to the versions of the Scriptures in the Würtemberg library, amounting in all to "more than 4,000 different editions of the whole Bible, or of distinct parts of the same;" and accompanied his account with expressions of the highest gratification and surprise at the motive and object of those inquiries to which his answer was requested. "When I read your letter," (says the Professor,) "I could not help thinking the English are the most distinguished people in the world. Had we possessed in Germany the utmost tranquillity and prosperity, yet such a noble design of diffusing the Bible would scarcely have entered our minds, or, in case it had, would not have met with such

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generous encouragement and support. One cannot but highly esteem such a nation, and the more so, on account of its regard for the best of books, which, though now shamefully neglected, has ever proved, and will continue to be, the great means of meliorating the condition of mankind." These sentiments, now become familiar by the frequency with which they have been reiterated from so many quarters, reflect great honor on the candid spirit of their author; and evince at the same time the seasonableness and the beneficial tendency of the Institution to which they are applied.

From Sweden, through the late Rev. Dr. Brunnmark, Chaplain to the Swedish Embassy in London, of whose active and useful services there will be occasion hereafter to speak, information was received, which appeared to supersede the necessity of any exertions in that portion of the continent. The informants were, the Society "*pro Fide et Christianismo*" at Stockholm, and the purport of their information was, "that, owing to the gracious and paternal care of the government of their country, as well as from the gospel-light and zeal which had generally spread among individuals, no want existed of that holy book which contains in it the fountain of all knowledge, bringing salvation and producing good-will among men; and moreover, that Bibles in the Finland and Lapland languages were currently

printed at Stockholm, and distributed either gratis or at very reduced prices, by Societies formed for that benevolent purpose." How little accuracy there was in this representation, which was believed by the reporters to be conscientiously exact, and which, out of respect to the venerable source from which it originated, and the channel through which it was transmitted, had the effect of staying for a considerable period the Society's operations in Sweden, will be seen as this History proceeds. Suffice it for the present to say, that the account was derived from the best means of information which existed, previously to that developement of the popular wants, which the persevering inquiries of the British and Foreign Bible Society produced; and that from the time when its incorrectness was discovered, both Dr. Brunnmark and his countrymen displayed a zeal and activity, increasing progressively from year to year, in disseminating through Sweden and Lapland those sacred treasures of which they had been erroneously supposed to be so completely possessed.

This incident may serve to account for the existence of a similar persuasion in the minds of many respectable individuals, with regard to the condition of our own population as to their possession of the Scriptures; and to apologize for the zeal with which they have impugned the domestic exertions of the British and Foreign

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Bible Society as altogether uncalled for and superfluous. The course of investigation has brought to light a state of scarcity in our own country, of which the objectors could not have been aware; and it is not requiring too much to expect that their disposition to co-operate in remedying the wants of the country, now that they are unequivocally ascertained, will be in proportion to the confidence with which they disputed the existence of those wants, and decried the Institution which proffered its assistance to supply them.

From Holland, the queries proposed respecting the state of the Scriptures, extracted a reply of a similar tendency to that which had been transmitted from Sweden. The Dutch, through a respectable minister at Rotterdam, expressed their joy at the establishment of this laudable Institution for rendering the word of God accessible to the indigent, and prayed for a blessing on its benevolent endeavours. "But" (adds this minister) "with us there is, thank God, no scarcity of Bibles." On this statement (which, however, it is to be observed, is but the statement of an individual) the late formation of the United Netherlands' Bible Society, and the discoveries made in the course of its operations, will be found to supply a comment which will lend confirmation to the remarks just made on a similar misapprehension, so long entertained by many

enlightened and benevolent persons as to the state of the Scriptures, both in Sweden and Great Britain.

While, however, this account from Holland discouraged any present exertions for the furtherance of the Society's object in that country, it contained sentiments expressive of a religious sympathy which, considering the state of mutual exasperation occasioned by the war, were deservedly regarded as very consolatory and important.

" You feelingly express your regret," (writes this pious and amiable correspondent,) " that the union between the two nations in which we respectively live, has been unhappily dissolved by the war. Oh, my dear Sir! could you be among us, you would soon be convinced that three fourths of our nation lament the unhappy quarrel which, for some years past, has divided two nations, which yet have one common interest in the service of the Gospel. But we are a defenceless people, who daily pray to God to have mercy upon us; and so far from being inimical to the English nation, we rather rejoice that not more than two Dutchmen were to be found, who would so far degrade themselves as to advise a plan for the invasion of a country, for the preservation of which we are as anxiously solicitous as for that of our own."

The intelligence derived from Berlin purported, that the want of the Scriptures in the Bohemian

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language was very great; and that persons of consideration had actually offered annual contributions towards printing an edition of the Bohemian Bible: but that the means arising from them were insufficient for the purpose. Upon this information, which was furnished by the Rev. Mr. Jænické, Minister of the Protestant Bohemian congregation, a similar step was taken to that which had been adopted with so much success in the case of Nurenberg; and the sum of 100*l.* was tendered, should a Bible Society be formed at Berlin to promote a continual circulation of the Holy Scriptures.

But of all the communications elicited by the inquiries propagated through different parts of the continent of Europe, that which excited the greatest surprise, and administered the highest gratification, was, an address from a Roman Catholic Clergyman in Swabia. This extraordinary address, dictated by spontaneous feeling, was written in a tone of sentiment and affection, so abhorrent from the spirit which had generally characterized the proceedings of the Roman Catholic Church towards Members of other religious communions, that it was read with astonishment, and greeted as the indication of an improved temper in the members of that church, and the harbinger of a better understanding than had hitherto subsisted between them and their brethren of every other denomination throughout Christendom.

As this was the first document which evinced, on the part of the Catholics, a desire to co-operate in the distribution of the Scriptures, and as it opened a way for that connection with them which has since been cultivated with so much harmony and effect, it will be proper to extract such passages from the letter as may do justice to the principles of this enlightened Priest, and those of his Brethren who participated with him in sentiments at once so just and so happily expressed.

" You will not, I trust, be displeased, if an entire stranger to you presumes to address you in a letter. I had the pleasure to learn, from a copy of your letter, addressed to Mr. ——, of Nurenberg, the great number of zealous friends of the Bible in London, who are filled with a noble desire to send out the pure word of God, as the best preacher, into the world. This account excited in my breast the most heartfelt joy and gratitude towards that God who is the only Giver of ' every good and perfect gift ;' but I felt also lively emotions of unfeigned love and affection for you, and for all the Members of the venerable Bible Society, for whom I wish a thousand blessings. May the Lord Jesus, through whom all blessings are communicated to us, be the beginning and end of their praiseworthy undertaking ! And may his name be glorified for it to all eternity

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"What particularly induced me to write, was, your question, 'Whether the Bible was still prohibited to the Catholics?' Being convinced thereby, that you were mindful even of the poor Catholics, I was particularly moved and edified: for, indeed, nothing is more affecting than that love which embraces all, without the least distinction; 'for God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.' I felt myself, therefore, constrained to thank you, in the name of all honest and well-disposed Catholics, for these your fraternal sentiments.

"In answer to your question, I observe, properly speaking, the Bible has never been prohibited to the Catholics.* The Council of Trent only states,

* The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Cranganore differed from this enlightened Priest in his construction of the Decree of the Council of Trent; as appears from his reply to the Vicar of Cranganore, who asked this his Spiritual Superior, "if he could, in safe conscience, accept the offer of the Bible, printed in Malabar, without notes, to be circulated among the Malabar Christians."

"I say" (was the language of the Archbishop) "that you cannot receive such books as are offered you; as the reading of the Bible, without notes, approved by the church, is expressly prohibited, even to those who have liberty to read prohibited books. *The declaration of the venerable German Priest, who says that there is no prohibition according to the Council of Trent, must be understood in another manner.*" And in a subsequent letter on the same business, to Lieut. Col. De Morgan, the Archbishop expresses very decidedly what he means by that other *manner*.

"I was astonished" (writes the Archbishop) "when he (the

—*Indiscriminata lectio Sacræ Scripturæ interdicta est.* Well-informed Catholics took this always in that sense only—that not all Books of the Bible, *promiscuously*, should be put into the hands of the common people; referring chiefly to some books of the Old Testament. Besides, this prohibition of the Council of Trent has never been admitted as binding by the whole body of the Roman Catholic clergy in Germany: but so much is true, that all blind bigots of our church have always spread the opinion, that it was entirely forbidden for all laymen to read the Bible; and this prejudice is, alas! still deeply prevalent among the greater part of the people. There are, however, at present, many of our clergymen, both in Swabia and Bavaria, who strongly recommend the reading of the Bible, chiefly of the New Testament, and do every thing in their power to promote it. I have, for my own part, distributed many New Testaments, and some Bibles, among more enlightened Catholics; and several of my dear brethren in Christ do the same.

"Should an Institution be established among us, upon your plan, I am sure we could dispose

Vicar) said, that he would take charge of a thing that is impossible for him: *because the Holy Bible is prohibited to be read by the Roman Catholics, with the exception of some parts, which are called* consilio evidentiore."—Appendix to Fourth Report of the Calcutta Auxiliary Bible Society.

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of a good number of Bibles and New Testaments. The people seem to get more and more desirous of the Bible; and the number of clergymen is increasing, who not only would tolerate, but commend the reading of it.

"I feel a very great desire to witness the formation of a similar Bible Society among the Roman Catholics: and, indeed, I will make some attempts; though I foresee many difficulties, and can hardly suppose that so many active and benevolent friends of the Bible are to be found among the Roman Catholics as would be requisite for such an undertaking. Your question, however, respecting the Catholics, inspires me with the hope that your Society is desirous to extend its beneficial influence likewise to the Catholics; wishing only to know, whether a dispersion of Bibles among them would be practicable; and, indeed, it would not only be practicable, but desirable in the highest degree.

"Now, I beg you, my dear brother in Christ, to receive these few lines in love. I wrote this, trusting it might be acceptable to your venerable Society. I cannot express, in terms sufficiently strong, the fervency of my joy, and of my love towards all who, throughout England, heartily believe in Jesus Christ as their only Saviour, and zealously endeavour to extend the Redeemer's kingdom. I embrace them all as the beloved and elect of God, as friends and brethren in

Christ, let them be of whatever name, or belong to whatever church or denomination. The more distant the countries, and the more different the outward forms and establishments are, the more I rejoice, if I am privileged to hear that our ever-faithful Lord and Saviour is gathering from among them a flock of believing people. Truly, God has a numerous *Army of Reserve* in England, who do not bow before the Baal of the age, nor sacrifice to the god of the times. Let all who know his name, glorify him for this mercy! May the peace of God, and the all-sufficient grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, be with you all!"

Among the many distinguished friends of the Society by whom this communication from so unexpected a quarter was received with emotions of real gratification, no one manifested those feelings more strongly than the venerable Bishop Porteus. That Prelate may be truly said to have rejoiced in the contents of this extraordinary document "with exceeding great joy." By the Bishop's desire, the author read it publicly at his Lordship's table: the overflowings of his liberal heart were poured forth on the occasion in the warmest expressions of surprise and delight. The scene was novel and affecting: the Catholic Priest and the Protestant Bishop appeared to recognize each other as members and functionaries of the same undivided church: while "The Lord be with you" was uttered by the one, the other seemed

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to return the corresponding salutation—" And with thy spirit."

The production of this letter excited, as may be supposed, in the breasts of the Committee, a desire to improve, what to their minds appeared a most favorable occurrence. Regarding it as an invitation to occupy a field from which they had considered themselves as altogether excluded, they accepted the challenge with thankfulness, and determined to meet it with a suitable demonstration of cordiality and friendship. In this sentiment, they resolved to place 1000 copies of the Protestant New Testament, then printing in Nurenberg, at the disposal of this zealous correspondent, for distribution, by sale or gift, among the Roman Catholics in Swabia and Bavaria; and directed him to be assured of their sincere disposition to afford the members of his communion every degree of aid consistent with the principles and means of the Institution.

These transactions comprehend every thing which it is material to record in the history of the Society's attempt to establish a system of foreign relations, from its commencement to the month of December 1804. The ground was by these means broken up, and, to a certain degree, brought into cultivation. The German Society planted at Nurenberg had taken root, and was already beginning to shew signs of fruitfulness by a determination to print 5000 copies of a Pro-

testant New Testament; and a train was laid for producing similar Establishments or exertions of a kindred description, in other parts of the continent.

Nor were the efforts employed with a view to the enlargement of the Society's domestic connections attended with less prosperity. The Circular Address, subscribed by the President, and dispatched, under his Lordship's sanction, to a considerable number of the Clergy, Dissenting Ministers, and persons of influence, brought back, in return, from various parts of the country, warm congratulations on the establishment of the Society, and the most friendly assurances of a liberal and active co-operation.

In the mean time, the measures adopted for supplying the inhabitants of the United Kingdom with the Scriptures in the English and Welsh languages, continued to be prosecuted with unabated vigor; and advanced as rapidly as, from the more tardy process of casting the stereotype plates, and other impediments inseparable from the execution of great and important concerns, could be reasonably expected.

Things had attained this state, when an incident occurred, which afforded the Society an opportunity of making the first application of its funds to the printing of a portion of the Scriptures in a foreign language, under its own immediate direction.

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Captain John Norton,* a Chief of the Six-Nation Indians in Upper Canada, having been induced to visit England, partly with the design of serving in the British army, but principally with that of obtaining a confirmation of the Grant under which his Indian brethren occupied the Grand River settlement, fell into a connection which gave his mind, originally intent on the general welfare of his Tribes, a more decided direction towards their moral and religious improvement. Under this impression, he was advised to employ his intervals of leisure, in translating the Gospel of St. John into the Mohawk dialect, the current language of these confederated nations. The reason for making choice of this Gospel was, that the Mohawks were already in possession of the Liturgy of the Church of England, select portions of the Old and New Testaments, and the entire Gospel of St. Mark,† translated by Captain Brant:

* Captain Norton was adopted by the Confederacy in 1791, and in 1800, appointed a Chief, under the title of Teyoninhokarawen. His father was a Cherokee, and served in the British army.

† A translation was also made of the Gospel of St. Matthew, together with many chapters both of the Old and New Testament, about the beginning of the eighteenth century, by the Rev. Mr. Freeman. Some portions of the latter were printed at New York; and reprinted in London with "the Book of Common Prayer, &c." in 1787, for the use of the Mohawks, at the expense of Government. The Gospel of St. Matthew is supposed to remain in MS. See "Humphrey's

it appeared therefore desirable to furnish them with the means of adding to their stock of religious knowledge an acquaintance with the sublime doctrine contained in the Gospel of St. John.

It may not be amiss to say something of the people for whose use this translation was intended.

The Mohawks, and the Six Nations in general, were the old and steady allies of Great Britain. The incorporated Society for Propagating the Gospel, sent a mission among them in 1702, the first year after its incorporation; and had, by the blessing of God, the satisfaction of bringing over many to the faith and practice of Christianity.

These confederated Indians entered into an alliance with the English, immediately after the latter became possessed of the province of New York, in the seventeenth century. Their decided adherence to the British interest during the American war, made it expedient for them to abandon their ancient settlements, and remove to Upper Canada, when the independence of the British Colonies was acknowledged by this country. "Such was their attachment to our

Account of the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts;" also Preface to the "Book of Common Prayer, &c." as above-mentioned.

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common Sovereign, whom they consider as their Father, and such their predilection in favor of our nation, that they cheerfully submitted to this inconvenience rather than remain in their native country, when under a foreign jurisdiction."* At the time when this translation of St. John's Gospel was suggested for their benefit, the number settled on the Grand River, though much reduced by various causes, some of which it was the object of Captain Norton's negociation to remove, amounted to at least 2000 souls. The total of the Confederacy, (including the Caghnawagues, Hurons, or Wyandots, who professed the Roman Catholic religion,) was computed to exceed 8000.† Add to this, that the dialect of the Mohawk was intelligible to certain other of the Aboriginal Tribes; and that a very encouraging disposition had been shewn to receive religious instruction.

Captain Norton appeared to be in every

* Preface to "Book of Common Prayer, &c." before cited.

† The Six Nations are the *Ondowaghas*, or *Senecas*, the *Cayeugas*, the *Onondagas*, the *Oneidas*, the *Mohawks*, and the *Tuscaroras*. To these, which are Protestants, and settled in Upper Canada, may be added the *Caghnawagues*, themselves Mohawks, who were converted to the Roman Catholic religion, and led to Lower Canada, by the French Missionaries; and the *Hurons*, or *Wyandots*, a people speaking a language nearly similar to that of the above-named Confederates. These latter are also Roman Catholics; they inhabit near *Detroit*, and have, besides, one village near Quebec.

respect, qualified to execute the projected translation. He was a man of great natural acuteness and much reflection; and united with a strong sense of religion an ardent devotion to the interest of his Tribes. His knowledge of the English language, which was familiar to him from his childhood, had been improved by two years of education in Scotland; and that of the Mohawk, in which dialect he had served as Interpreter to the British army, had been matured and perfected by long residence in the Grand River settlement. To these general qualifications were added an extensive acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, and an increased conviction of their importance, derived in great measure from that intercourse which he had been led to cultivate with men of distinguished piety and of religious as well as general information.

As it was the desire of the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society to ascertain, with as much accuracy as possible, the correctness and fidelity of the translation, and it was not probable that another person could be found in Great Britain who understood the language into which it was made, recourse was had to the following expedient.

On an occasion which gave the author an opportunity of introducing the Translator to a respectable company, he took advantage of the presence of some gentlemen, whose testimony he

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considered of eminent value, to bring the subject of the Mohawk translation, then nearly completed, into discussion. A proposal was made, and universally acceded to, that, as the only test by which the accuracy of his version could be tried, Captain Norton should be requested to retranslate a portion of his MS. into literal English. With this request Captain Norton complied, and immediately read, in the manner proposed, the 17th chapter of St. John. The suffrages of the company were then collected; and they were found to be unanimous in pronouncing, as far as the evidence appeared, that the translation was made with equal fidelity and judgment. Among those who sat in this court of criticism, and concurred most warmly in the decision as reported, the author trusts he shall be excused for mentioning the Rev. Professor Bridge, of the East India College; the Rev. Dr. Hamilton, Rector of St. Olave's, Jewry; and the Rev. R. Ormerod, A.M. Vicar of Kensington.

The translation having been thus accredited, the Committee felt no hesitation in adopting it: an impression, consisting of 2000 copies in Mohawk and English, was accordingly printed. A proportion of the edition was consigned to the care of Captain Norton; and, under his direction, copies were furnished to different stations in Upper Canada, and in the Ohio and Oneida country. The favorable opinion entertained of

the translation was shortly after confirmed by the judgment of the Interpreters in the Indian villages, who pronounced it to be "very correct:" and the fact of its circulation has been proved by the following statement, which appeared in the Address of the Salem Bible Society at the close of 1810. Speaking of the exertions made by the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Address thus proceeds: "They have penetrated into the wilds of the American continent, and published the Gospel in Indian and English;" and it adds, by way of confirmation, "as an interesting fact, that one of the Oneida Indians, who visited Salem the preceding summer, carried in his bosom a copy of St. John's Gospel in the Mohawk and English language."

A circumstance arose in the course of this transaction, which afforded the conductors of the Society an opportunity of bringing their principles to the trial. The Translator, desirous to conciliate the attention of the Mohawks, and prepare their minds for appreciating the treasure with which the British and Foreign Bible Society had supplied them, drew up a short introductory address in Mohawk and English, and, without consultation, prefixed it to the work. In this state six copies were bound, and presented as specimens of binding, to a Sub-Committee, whose office it was to superintend this department of the Society's service. Immediately upon the

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discovery, a resolution was passed, that the portion which contained the introductory address should be removed from the copies already bound; and that it should in no case be united with the text in such copies as should hereafter be issued under the sanction and responsibility of the Society. As the record of this determination evinced the promptitude and firmness with which the first approach to deviation from the fundamental laws of the Society was resisted, it may be satisfactory to the reader to see the terms in which it was expressed.

"An Address to the Six Nations having been written by the Translator, and printed uniformly with the Gospel, your Sub-Committee have ordered the same to be wholly separated from the Translation of the Gospel, and not in any instance to be bonnd up with it; it being incompatible with a fundamental principle of this Institution to attach to the Scriptures any additional matter whatever."

In justice to the Translator it should be stated, that the Address contained no other sentiments than those which every Christian might be expected to approve; and as there was, throughout it, an interesting simplicity, characteristic of the kindest disposition and the purest principles, a brief extract from the closing part of it may not be unacceptable to the reader.

" As Jehovah our Lord loveth mankind, and is ever mercifully aiding those who stand in need, so are also his people, that is, the truly pious; considering all men as brethren in whatever quarter may be their place of habitation; and wherever they may see them labouring under difficulties, they feel for them, and hasten to their assistance. Thus are the true worshippers of God, to the extent of their ability, communicating kindness to their brethren.

" Much have I seen of this influence since I left you; for truly I have been, as it were, led by the hand to the abode of those who love and revere the system and precepts he has ordained for us, and daily study by what means they may fulfil his will; I have been much rejoiced by the additional strength and aid I have thereby received in religion.

" Far distant from them is the situation of our brethren and mutual children, where our habitations occupy along the banks of our river Oghswègo, or the opposite shores of Lake Erie, where the smoke arises from the fires of the Ondowaga, on whom is hinged the door of the confederacy: yet, notwithstanding, when they became acquainted with the condition of our country, they considered, by what means the gospel of Jesus might more fully be declared in those parts where our brethren were scattered; that they might lead them into the path which

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endeth in heaven. As soon therefore as I had translated this, they caused it to be printed, to the amount of 2,000 copies, considering that number as fully adequate, for all those who speak our language.

" I have received great pleasure from this kind communication of the Gospel. I rejoice, and salute in thankfulness Him who resides in the heavens, for having thus influenced their minds to aid us. Exert yourselves, friends; let us strictly adhere to what our Lord has transmitted to us in the Holy Scriptures, that thereby the unbelievers, in viewing us, may become enamoured of the Gospel, and may know that we are truly pious by the love we bear the commandments of God, and that we have there placed our minds without guile; and may also see that we are of the company of Christ, not only in name and profession, as too many are, but also in our pious demeanour and virtuous lives. Let us also follow the example of those who have favored us with this book; by our spreading the holy religion to the utmost of our ability, that all our brethren, wherever they may dwell, may be made acquainted with the name of Jesus Christ, and may know the dispensation ordained for us by God.

" Four of the disciples of our blessed Lord, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, wrote the history of his life, doctrines, and miracles: of these, the latter was the peculiarly beloved, and

is the most circumstantial in the essential points of doctrine; and you will see throughout how strongly is inculcated reverence to God, and love to man: which let us earnestly pray God ever to preserve us in, by the influence of His Holy Spirit, and through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ.

" (Signed) TEYONINHOKARAWEN."*

London, January 23, 1805.

About the period when the business of the Mohawk Gospel was entered upon, the foundation was laid for that Biblical Library which, by gradual accumulation, is now become so considerable and important. It had appeared for some time to many friends of the Institution in a high degree desirable and expedient, that copies should be procured (as far as practicable) of all the existing versions of the Holy Scriptures; in order that the Society might not be at a loss for

* It will afford pleasure to the reader to observe, by the Gazettes, and other public documents, that upon the commencement of hostilities between Great Britain and America, this Chief approved his loyalty to his Great Father by joining the British standard; and that his conduct, at the head of his Indian warriors, was signalized throughout the war by such a display of courage, judgment, and perseverance, as to gain him repeatedly the thanks of the military commanders in Canada, and a special mark of respect and acknowledgment from His Royal Highness the Prince Regent.

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a standard edition, and the means of collation, whenever an occasion might arise for printing an impression on its own account. The first step which was taken in pursuit of this end is to be traced in a resolution passed on the 3d of December, 1804, by which it was determined, that of every edition or translation of the Holy Scriptures, or of parts thereof, printed under the auspices of the British and Foreign Bible Society, six or more copies should be transmitted, to be lodged in its Depository. But as it was foreseen that the operation of this measure would be unavoidably slow, limited, and remote, it was further determined, on the ensuing 17th, that an appeal should be made to the community at large, through the medium of certain daily newspapers and periodical publications of character, soliciting donations of Bibles, Testaments, or portions of the Scriptures, in the ancient or modern languages. The first fruits of this determination were a munificent present from Granville Sharp, Esq. of thirty-nine copies of the Holy Scriptures, or certain portions of them, in various languages, together with the Irish and Italian versions of the English liturgy. Thus the first chairman of the Society became also the first contributor to its library. A benefaction so liberal, and in every respect so seasonable and advantageous, demanded some special acknowledgment. The office of conveying the Society's gratitude was

cheerfully undertaken by the President, and the following letter will show with what appropriate feeling his Lordship discharged this agreeable duty.

To Granville Sharp, Esq.

" Sir,

" It is with the sincerest satisfaction that I execute the instructions of the Committee of the Bible Society, in returning their most cordial thanks to you, for the very valuable collection of Bibles, Testaments, and Psalters, in different languages which you have presented to them.

" I cannot indeed but feel a peculiar satisfaction in the opportunity thus afforded me, of expressing the sense entertained by the Committee, of the great value of the donation itself, as well as of the high estimation in which they hold the donor.

" That Providence may long continue to you, with every blessing, the enjoyment of a life which you have adorned no less by your talents than by your wishes, is the unanimous wish of all, and of none more sincerely than of him who has the honor to subscribe himself, with the greatest regard and esteem,

" Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

TEIGNMOUTH,

Jan. 7, 1805. President."

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The commencement of the year 1805 was rendered memorable in the annals of the Society, by a serious and protracted discussion relative to the text at that time preparing for the proposed edition of the Welsh Bible. As this transaction has been frequently cited with a view to disparage the character of the Institution, the author will lay before the reader a brief recital of it, referring him, if desirous of more detailed information, to the Rev. Mr. Dealtry's Vindication of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and a letter from the Rev. J. Roberts to that gentleman, published in 1811, under the title of "Welsh Bibles."

It having been resolved, on the 3d of September, 1804,* that an edition of Welsh Bibles and Testaments should be printed with all convenient dispatch; and the Rev. Thomas Charles of Bala, (whose inquiry for copies of the Welsh Scriptures led to the formation of the Society,) having been pointed out as fully competent, from his knowledge of the language, to prepare a copy for the press, a correspondence took place on the subject, and the result was a determination to accept Mr. Charles's proffered services; and an engagement to that effect was mutually concluded. As the work was to be executed at Cambridge, under the immediate sanction of the Syndics of the University Press, whose credit, no less than

* See page 18.

that of the Society, was concerned, that it should be as complete and unexceptionable as possible, application was directed to be made to that learned body, requesting to know, whether it would be agreeable to the University to print from the Oxford copy of 1799, revised by Mr. Charles, and to allow the Committee of the Society to nominate a corrector of the press. The proposition was very readily assented to, and Mr. Charles proceeded accordingly in his task of preparing the Welsh text with all convenient expedition.

In this stage of the business, his Lordship, the President, received a communication from the Bishop of London, enclosing a letter, addressed to the Bishop, by the Rev. Dr. Gaskin, Secretary to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, together with an extract of a letter from the Rev. John Roberts, complaining of the Society's conduct in preparing the Welsh Bible, a copy of which extract, as the Secretary stated, was forwarded " by direction of the Board," to all the Bishops whose names appeared as Vice-Presidents of the British and Foreign Bible Society. In the letter of Dr. Gaskin, Mr. Roberts, the complainant, was described as " a very respectable Clergyman and eminent Welsh Scholar, who had been employed by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in correcting the press of the last Oxford edition of the Welsh

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Bible;" and the complaint, as conveyed through the extract from Mr. Roberts's letter, was, that, in the edition preparing for the press by the British and Foreign Bible Society, improper alterations had been made in "the present orthography of the Welsh version of the Bible;" which "has" (adds Mr. Roberts) "been thought for centuries not only unexceptionable, but a model of purity and correctness, and considered as the standard of criticism and pure language."

The Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society were informed of these circumstances by a letter from their President on the 21st of January 1805; and, from deference to the opinion of Mr. Roberts, under the sanction which it had received from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; from respect to their Right Rev. Vice-Presidents; and above all, from an anxious desire that their proposed edition of the Welsh Bible should be liable to no just exception, they immediately appointed a Sub-Committee to inquire into the grounds of Mr. Roberts's objection.

The Sub-Committee so appointed, at the head of which was the President himself, held repeated meetings, and adopted the most prompt and judicious steps for ascertaining the real merits of the controversy. They lost no time in requesting of Mr. Charles to explain the nature and extent of the corrections which he had made in

the text of 1799. This explanation Mr. Charles very readily furnished, in a lucid and satisfactory statement; and the Sub-Committee, after a patient and elaborate investigation, delivered in their definitive report. Without taking upon themselves to pronounce any judgment on the alterations in orthography, or on the general corrections, they vindicated the conduct of Mr. Charles from the suspicion of attempting or intending any change in the translation, and expressed their real satisfaction in having been able to show that the confidence reposed in him had been amply justified. Copies of this report, together with Mr. Charles's statement, were ordered to be communicated to each of the Vice-Presidents, and to the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press. On the reserved question relative to the changes in orthography, it was considered expedient to obtain the judgment of another tribunal. An arbitrator was proposed and accepted in the person of the Rev. Walter Davies, of Myfod, a Welsh scholar of acknowledged reputation; and to his decision the question was finally referred.

Things had been placed in this train, when intelligence was received, that the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge had passed a Resolution on the 12th of March, 1805, to print 20,000 Welsh Bibles from the edition of 1746,

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which they subsequently altered to the edition of 1752.* The Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society, desirous of preserving uniformity in the text, determined to adopt the same standard; and thereby superseded the necessity of further investigation.

Having given a simple and authentic narrative of this transaction, which has been so imperfectly understood by the friends, and so grossly misrepresented by the enemies of the Institution, the author's only remaining anxiety is, that the parties more particularly implicated in it may be seen in their proper light.

Of the promptitude, the diligence, and the impartiality of Lord Teignmouth, something has been already intimated; and too much cannot be said. His Lordship seized the earliest opportu-

* This may be a proper place for correcting the misrepresentation which has been so industriously propagated respecting the Welsh Bible printed by the British and Foreign Bible Society. It has been confidently stated, that it was printed from rivalry and opposition to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. "This" (says Lord Teignmouth with great truth,) "is denied. The first order for printing an edition of the Welsh Scriptures on account of the Bible Society, was dated on the 3d of September 1804; the first information which the Committee of that Society received 'that the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge had come to a resolution, at their last meeting, to print an edition of 20,000 Welsh Bibles, &c.,' was made in the words of the quotation, by a Member of both Societies, on the 18th of March, 1805. The spirit of rivalry in this case must have been prophetic." (Letter to Dr. Wordsworth, p. 11.)

nity, after receiving the communication from the Bishop of London, to promote inquiry into the matter of complaint; manifested a sober and undisturbed equanimity throughout the whole course of the investigation; and continued, with unwearied perseverance, to direct those councils in which it was carried on, till he saw it brought to a complete and satisfactory conclusion. In confirmation of this account, an appeal may be made to the Official Correspondence as detailed by Mr. Dealtry, in the Appendix to his "Vindication of the British and Foreign Bible Society." The whole of that Correspondence will be found to reflect the greatest honor upon the conduct of the President; and the following extract will enable the reader to judge what he may expect from the perusal of it.

Extract from Lord Teignmouth's Letter to the Committee. January 19, 1805.

"In the publication of the Welsh Bible, the Committee most properly considered it their duty to make the new edition as correct as possible; and confiding in the judgment and abilities of Mr. Charles, they accepted his assistance in preparing that edition for the press. The zeal and assiduity with which that gentleman has discharged the task, are entitled to the grateful acknowledgments of the Committee: but the

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propriety of his emendations (as far as orthography is concerned) has been questioned by a gentleman of respectability, who, I am informed, superintended the very edition which Mr. Charles has corrected; and the Committee of a Society, which deservedly holds a high place in the public estimation, has given its sanction to the objections of Mr. Roberts. Its opinion will naturally have great weight, and *may* have a prejudicial influence on the interests and success of our Society, if they should persevere in printing the Welsh Bible, without a full consideration of those objections. They would, indeed, have merited the attention of the Committee, if they had come before them in any other mode; and this observation naturally suggests the propriety of the minutest investigation of the emendations proposed, and of the objections started. It cannot fail to do credit to the candor and impartiality of the Committee; and their final determination, whatever it may be, can then be made with confidence. Admitting the judgment of the Committee to be fully satisfied with the alterations made by Mr. Charles, such a conviction would not be sufficient to authorize the printing of the Welsh Bible with those alterations at present. The effect of them, we are told by Mr. Roberts, is to make the language a different dialect from that of the Bible at present in use; and that any departure from the established orthography will

be particularly inconvenient to the public. Mr. Roberts, indeed, appears to have formed his opinion on the supposed alterations without having seen them, and to judge from other specimens of novel orthography: but it would be idle to repel his objections by such a remark; it is more becoming, in my opinion, to meet them fairly, examine them coolly and impartially, and thus ascertain their validity in a firm resolution to yield to them, if valid. Till this examination be made, we shall not be properly qualified either to maintain or renounce the proposed amendments, and still less to satisfy the public mind, (an object of the greatest importance at all times, and most peculiarly so on the present occasion,) if ultimately it should be thought advisable to print the Bible in its amended form."

The conduct of the Committee in accepting the offer of a corrected copy of the Welsh Bible from an individual who, though not a regular Minister of the Established Church, was known to be a man of integrity, an excellent Welsh scholar, and critically acquainted with the sacred text; and who had also recommended himself to the esteem of the Society by his exertions in Wales to promote its success,—was certainly not of a nature to subject their proceedings to any just animadversion. The offer promised, in the first instance, to expedite the accomplishment of their object; and they were further induced

to embrace it by the hope of being able, through the zeal and industry of Mr. Charles, to give to their edition a superior degree of accuracy and correctness. As soon as they were informed that the propriety of the steps they were taking had been seriously controverted, they yielded to the advice of their noble President; embarked, under his direction, in a course of the most strict and conscientious inquiry; and evinced, by their behaviour throughout, and particularly by their adoption of a common text with the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, at the close, that they had no jealousy to indulge, no vanity to gratify, no peculiar interest to serve; no end, in short, which they were anxious to compass, but that of putting the word of God in a correct, intelligible, and acceptable form into the hands of the people.

To Mr. Charles, whatever may be thought of the system of orthography which he was desirous to adopt, nothing can be imputed, which will derogate in the slightest degree from his integrity, and his laudable zeal for the purity and correctness of the Welsh Bible. With a frankness and alacrity which nothing could have inspired but a confidence in the sincerity of his intentions, and (what to him appeared) the justness of his theory, he met all the inquiries promoted by that court in which the merits of his corrections were to be tried. Nor does it

redound little to his praise, that he manifested no symptom whatever of chagrin or resentment at the issue to which the investigation was brought; but voluntarily assisted in bringing foward that text by which it was determined that his own should be superseded.*

For the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, it must in justice be said, that the part which it acted was such as became an Institution, identified in principle and design with the doctrine and the discipline of the Established Church, and bound by the spirit of its constitution to watch over the text of Holy Scripture, and to rescue it from the injurious effects of wilful corruption or fanciful innovation.

One party only remains to be considered, and that is the respectable informant, with whom the whole business of the investigation originated. From the channel through which the complaint was transmitted, and the turn which was given to it by the enemies of the Society, as though it

* In what degree Mr. Charles afterwards contributed to improve the edition stereotyped at Oxford in 1809, by the corrections with which he supplied the conductors of that work, the author will not undertake to say: so much, however, he can assert, from an inspection of correspondence in the possession of Mr. Charles's family, that corrections were repeatedly transmitted by that excellent man; that many of them were "inserted;" and that his finishing of them was represented as conferring an obligation not only on the conductors of the edition, but on "the Principality at large."

amounted to a charge of altering the *translation*, and not the *orthography*, Mr. Roberts certainly fell for a time under the suspicion of not being influenced by the most friendly motives in the part which he had acted. The question at issue was also of a description to require, in order to determine on which side the truth lay, a knowledge of the Welsh language, which those on whom the investigation of it devolved, in no degree possessed. Add to this, that, for the reasons already given, the arbitration was arrested shortly after it had commenced; and by its entire supersession the real subject of difference between the litigant parties remained wholly undecided. Truth however requires the acknowledgment, that Mr. Roberts has brought forward such evidence in support of his objection to the new orthography,* as to leave no room for doubting what would have been the judgment of the Arbitrator on this part of the controversy, had the question been carried to a decision.† For the

* See "Welsh Bibles."

† It is due to Mr. Roberts to state, that, in a letter addressed to him by the Rev. Walter Davies, in June, 1805, the latter gives a decided opinion against the new orthography. "The Holy Scriptures," (says Mr. Davies) "as they now stand, excepting a few typographical errors, and inaccuracies of punctuation, are, according to the best of my judgment, exactly as they ought to be. I do not see, among the numerous proposed alterations in orthography, a single item of any weight. The gutturals, aspirates, and plenitude of consonants, though considered an eye-sore in the new theory of vision, are never-

motives by which Mr. Roberts was actuated, there was every thing in his conduct, subsequently to the date of his original complaint, to authorize the belief, that they were strictly honorable and conscientious; and that he intended nothing so little, by the course he pursued, as to afford an opportunity for the invidious use which was in some instances made of his communication. In the letter before-cited, Mr. Roberts expresses his "feelings of extreme concern for the circumstances which introduced him to the notice of the British and Foreign Bible Society." "With heart and soul" (he continues) "would I labour and co-operate with every friend of the human race in promoting the circulation of the Holy Scriptures. While I view Christendom burning with seraphic zeal in carrying on this work of God-like benevolence, I cannot but hope and pray, that some genuine particle of the same sacred zeal may ever animate my own bosom as a vital principle of action." The close of his letter, while it completes Mr. Roberts's vindication of his conduct, may very properly terminate this account of the controversy.

"Now, while I repeat my coincidence of opinion with our national authorities, I cannot help at the same time expressing my deepest

theless, and have been, for a length of time, the appropriate and peculiar characteristics of our language." — "Welsh Bibles," p. 22.

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regret, if there has been any thing reprehensible in the language and mode of my opposition to its* intended adoption in a Biblical edition: or if its prevention could have been effected in a manner more conciliatory, and expressive of the respect due to the character which Mr. Charles supports as a Christian. Much indeed would I deprecate the guilt of embarrassing any individual or Societies in their honest endeavours to supply immortal beings with the records of divine revelation. Living as we do in an important period of time, and the voice of Jehovah so audibly in his providence admonishing his servants to abound in fruits of righteousness and works of benevolence; we cannot but feel our obligations to employ hand and tongue, and exert the utmost energies of head and heart, in promoting the prosperity and glory of Christ's holy catholic church, that is at this time looking forth as the morning, fair as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

By this time intelligence was received from Bâsle, in answer to the communication addressed to that place, inviting its inhabitants to co-operate with the British and Foreign Bible Society in the advancement of its foreign object. The parties who had been addressed, announced their willingness to adopt the proposal of forming a Bible Society for their town and vicinity; but added,

* Viz. the new orthography.

that, from local difficulties, they were not yet in a condition to proceed to such an establishment; they had therefore determined, under present circumstances, to unite their exertions with those of their brethren at Nurenberg.

An interesting letter was also transmitted from the Rev. Mr. Oberlin, Minister of a parish in Alsace, containing five villages, and embracing a mixed religious population of Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Reformed, and Baptists. This letter reported the intended distribution of some French and German Bibles, purchased by funds with which Mr. Oberlin had been supplied from England; and the pastoral simplicity with which it described the principal characters for whom the gift of a Bible was designed, recommended it warmly to the feelings of the Committee, and will, it is believed, sufficiently apologize to the reader for its insertion.

"I have made a list of such persons as I consider most deserving of such a present. Among the large number of individuals and families to whom a Bible is a most welcome present, I first put down such characters as are most active in promoting the Redeemer's kingdom, and in doing good to the bodies and souls of their fellow-men.

"1. The *first* Bible shall be given as a present to Sophia Bernard, who is one of the most excellent women I know, and, indeed, an ornament to my parish. While unmarried, she undertook,

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with the consent of her parents, the support and education of three helpless boys, whom their wicked father had often trampled under his feet, and treated in a manner too shocking to relate, when, nearly starving with hunger, they dared to cry out for food. Soon afterwards, she proved the happy means of saving the lives of four Roman Catholic children, who, without her assistance, would have fallen a prey to want and famine. Thus she had the management of seven children, to whom several more were added, belonging to members of three several denominations: she now hired a house and a servant girl, and supported the whole of the family entirely with her own work, and the little money she got from the industry of the children, whom she taught to spin cotton. At the same time, she proved the greatest blessing to the whole village where she lived. For it is impossible to be more industrious, frugal, clean, cheerful, edifying by her whole walk and conversation; more ready for every good word and work; more mild and affectionate, more firm and resolute in dangers, than she was. Satan so enraged some of her enemies, that they threatened to destroy her old tottering cottage; but God was graciously pleased to preserve her. A fine youth, of a noble mind, made her an offer of his hand. She first refused, but he declared he would wait for her even ten years. When she replied, that she could never consent

to part from her poor orphans, he nobly answered, 'Whoever takes the mother, takes the children too.' So he did—and all these children were brought up by them in the most careful and excellent manner. Lately, they have taken in some other orphans, whom they are training up in the fear and love of God. Though these excellent people pass rather for rich, yet their income is so limited, and their benevolence so extensive, that sometimes they hardly know how to furnish a new suit of necessary clothes. To them I intend to give a Bible, considering that their own is very often lent out in different Roman Catholic villages.

"2. A *second* Bible I intend to give to an excellent woman, Maria Schepler, who lives at the opposite end of my extensive parish, where the cold is more severe, and the ground unfruitful, so that nearly all the householders are poor people, who must lend their clothes to each other when they intend to go to the Lord's Supper. This poor woman is also a very distinguished character, in whose praise I could say much, were I to enter into particulars. Though distressed and afflicted in her own person and circumstances, yet she is a mother, benefactress, and teacher to the whole village where she lives, and to some neighbouring districts too. She takes the most lively interest in all that relates to the Redeemer's kingdom upon earth, and often groans

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under a sense of all the inroads made by the powers of darkness. She also has brought up several orphans, without receiving the smallest reward, keeps a free-school for females, and makes it a practice to lend her Bible to such as are entirely deprived of it.

"A *third* Bible-present I intend to make to an excellent widow-woman, Catharine Scheiddegger, who is, like the former, a mother to orphans, and keeps a free-school; as also does another young woman, who instructs little children in a neighbouring village, in such knowledge as may render them useful members of human and Christian society.

"I might easily enumerate many more characters of a similar description, whose eyes will overflow with grateful tears, if they are favoured with the present of a Bible."

Coincident with the receipt of these communications from Germany, was that of the first regular information relative to the design entertained by the Baptist Missionaries at Serampore, to engage in an extensive system of oriental translations. The statement was conveyed in an extract of a letter from the Rev. Mr. (now Dr.) Carey at Calcutta, to the Secretary of the mission, the late Rev. Andrew Fuller; and it represented the Missionaries as already employed on four languages, and as possessing considerable advantages, should they be adequately supported, for

translating the Bible into all the languages of the East. As the letter of Dr. Carey was dated antecedently to the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and steps had been taken by the latter to establish at Calcutta a Corresponding Committee for the accomplishment of a similar design, in which Committee the three principal Baptist Missionaries were expressly included; it did not appear expedient that any further measures should at that time be adopted.

Such was the state to which things had arrived in both the domestic and the foreign department, when a publication appeared which opened upon the Society the first of those many attacks by which it was destined to be assaulted. The title of this publication was "An Address to Lord Teignmouth, President of the British and Foreign Bible Society, occasioned by his address to the Clergy of the Church of England; by a Country Clergyman:" and although the extravagant weakness and unmeasured scurrility of this composition deprived it of all just claim to consideration, yet the importance of the question which it professed to defend, the high tone of orthodoxy and churchmanship* which it assumed, and the extraordinary industry with which it was dis-

* The following specimens from the Address; the first, containing the Country Clergyman's theory of christian charity; the second, his sentiments on the mischief to be apprehended from a liberal distribution of the Scriptures; will show the reader, how little originality there has been in the

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persed, appeared to demand that it should not be permitted to circulate, without receiving some degree of attention. Such at least was the view taken of it by the Bishop of London. Aware of the mischievous influence which might be produced by the propagation of those notes of alarm which were sounded in the Country Clergyman's Address; and desirous to obtain for himself and the other Episcopal Patrons of the Society, the means of justifying to themselves and, should it be found necessary, to the world, the part they had taken, His Lordship, after some correspondence with the author on the subject, appointed a meeting of those Prelates at London-House, on Saturday the 9th of March, and requested that Lord

absurdities advanced by the majority of those who have succeeded the Country Clergyman in this line of controversy.

"Christian charity no where recommends associations of discordant principles, combinations of men professedly at variance, and in hostility with each other: but Christian charity enjoins that which renders all these elaborate Societies useless: it teaches and *obliges* Christians to be like-minded, to have one faith, one baptism, one speech, and one hope of their calling." Address, p. 11.

"It is to be expected, that each member of your heterogeneous Society will draw his portion of books for the promotion of his particular opinion: for it is easily seen, that a Bible given away by a Papist, will be productive of Popery. The Socinian will make his Bible speak and spread Socinianism: while the Calvinist, the Baptist, and the Quaker, will teach the opinions peculiar to their sects. *Supply these men with Bibles, (I speak as to a true Churchman,) and you supply them with arms against yourself.*" Id. p. 13.

Teignmouth and the author would attend on that occasion.

Having procured the Society's Minute and Correspondence Books, and made such extracts from both as seemed to bear on the case, the author accompanied Lord Teignmouth to the meeting in which the Institution was for the first time to be put upon its trial. The Prelates assembled were, the Bishops of London, Durham, and Exeter, (now Salisbury:) the Bishop of St. David's, being absent from town, was prevented from giving his attendance.

As the general accusation against the Society was, the danger which it threatened to the Established Church, some time was occupied in canvassing the ground upon which such a charge was pretended to be advanced. Certain questions were then proposed on the part of the Bishops, respecting the conduct of the Committee, and the nature and tendency of their ordinary proceedings. To these questions the author replied in general, that their Lordships having signified their approbation of the principles of the Society, he presumed it was not expected that he should enter into a justification of *them:* that he was prepared to show, by a reference to the official records of the Institution, that the Committee had acted in strict conformity with its fundamental regulations. The author then adduced, in proof of this assertion, and in more

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particular answer to the queries proposed, the facts and circumstances with which he was prepared; and concluded, by inviting their Lordships to examine the books, and to judge for themselves, whether the Society had not been faithful to its principles and engagements. The Bishop of Durham, who had taken the principal share in putting the interrogatories, testified his cordial acquiescence in this line of defence. "Show me" (said the Bishop) "that the Society has acted correctly, and I am satisfied."

The documents having been submitted to the inspection of their Lordships, and the matters in the statement produced by the author, particularly discussed, the Bishops expressed their entire satisfaction with the conduct of the Society; and unanimously determined, that it should continue to receive their patronage and support.

Lord Teignmouth, whose equanimity on this, as well as on every other occasion of similar trial, experienced no sort of perturbation, listened to all that was said on either side, with the most tranquil and dignified composure. At length, when the Prelates had delivered their judgment, his Lordship addressed them in these memorable words: "Well, my Lords, I know not what your Lordships may think, but for my own part I can truly say, I had rather be the object of ten such pamphlets, than the author of one of its pages. I thank God, my last moments will not be embit-

tered by the reflection of having written such a pamphlet."

After the meeting broke up, the author had a private interview with the Bishop of London, by his Lordship's request; and received his instructions to complete the business of the day by publicly replying to the Country Clergyman's Address. With these instructions the author yielded a ready compliance; and in little more than three weeks (viz. on the 6th of April) brought before the public a pamphlet entitled "A Letter to a Country Clergyman, occasioned by his Address to Lord Teignmouth, &c. by a Suburban Clergyman." What the merits of this answer were, in which invective was combated by raillery, and the weapon of ridicule was opposed to the panoply of prejudice, misrepresentation and alarm, it belongs to others to determine. It is sufficient for the author to know that, such as it was, it satisfied those whom it chiefly concerned him to please; and reconciled them more effectually to the determination they had formed to maintain their connection with the Institution.

While the controversy which has been related, was exercising the friends of the Society in the metropolis and its immediate vicinity, its affairs were making no little progress in different parts of the island. The known determination of the Society to furnish, with all possible expedition, a supply of the Welsh Scriptures, had raised

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the desponding minds of that ardent people, and stimulated them to extraordinary exertions in behalf of its funds. Mr. Charles promoted it with persevering activity among those classes to which his itinerant labors gained him access. The Bishop of Bangor (Dr. Warren) gave it the advantage of his recommendation; and instructed the Rural Deans throughout his diocese, to distribute its plans, and to solicit benefactions in its favor. By these and similar means the Institution was advertised in various divisions of the Principality; and the influence of this procedure was attested by a mass of contributions both congregational and personal, amounting within the year to nearly 1,900*l.** This sum was the more remarkable, and certainly not the less valuable, from the consideration of its having been contributed, for the most part, by persons composing the plain and inferior orders of the community. The words of the Society's correspondent are remarkable—

"There are none of our poor people willing to live and die without contributing their mites towards forwarding so glorious a design. Their zeal and eagerness in the good cause, surpass every thing I have ever before witnessed. On several occasions we have been obliged to check their liberality, and take half what they

* Vide List of Subscribers appended to the First Annual Report, under "Collections."

offered, and what we thought they ought to give. Great joy prevails universally at the thought that poor Heathens are likely soon to be in possession of a Bible; and you will never hear a prayer put up, without a petition for the Bible Society and Heathen Nations."

Scotland also began, about this period, to discover that attachment to the Society, and that concern for its prosperity, which, augmenting from year to year, have at length incorporated a large proportion of the Scottish population among the most ardent and generous promoters of the Institution. The link which connected the Society with that division of the British empire, was supplied by the personal service of the late pious and philanthropic David Dale, Esq.: and Glasgow, the place of his residence, was that part of Scotland, in which the Society was first publicly recognized, and measures were adopted for exciting a general interest in its support. It was not till November, 1804, that the Committee obtained an introduction to the acquaintance of this invaluable agent. For this advantage they were indebted to one of their number, Robert Steven, Esq.; a gentleman, whose services to the Society, both in its Scottish and its general connections, entitle him to honorable and grateful commemoration. Through this channel a communication was opened with Mr. Dale, and a supply of circular addresses transmitted to him

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for distribution, in such manner as he might find practicable and expedient. With a zeal correspondent to the expectation which had been encouraged, Mr. Dale immediately espoused the cause of the Society; and he took his measures with such promptitude and wisdom, that, through the divine blessing, he was enabled to announce, on the 4th of March, that the Presbytery of Glasgow had resolved on a public collection being made at all the churches within their bounds; and that it was intended by some active friends of the Institution among the Laity, to exert themselves in procuring general subscriptions.

This intelligence was followed, in the course of two months, by the gratifying information, that the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr had imitated the example of the Presbytery of Glasgow, and determined upon promoting a collection in behalf of the Society. This determination took place on the 11th of April, 1805; and the Synod ordered the statement on which their resolution had been grounded, to be printed, and sent to the ministers of the different churches and chapels within their bounds, "to be read from the pulpits, and the collection to be recommended with suitable exhortations:" they further ordered certain copies to be transmitted to every minister, in order "to be distributed among his people." To the late Rev. Dr. Dalrymple, Minister of Ayr, belongs

the honor of having brought the proposition under the consideration of the Synod. "I give you joy," (writes this venerable man to his friend Mr. Dale,) "and would take some small share of it myself, that we have lived to see the day of a British and Foreign Bible Society. In the 82d year of my age, and 59th of my ministry; next to both deaf and blind, it is little I can do in an active way to assist in so glorious a design: but that little shall not be wanting. This evening I intend to overture our Synod, for a collection, after the good example of the Presbytery of Glasgow; and I hope to succeed." With what primitive simplicity and apostolical earnestness such an advocate would be likely to plead, may be easily supposed: the success of his application has been seen; and it unites with the sentiments expressed in his letter, to challenge for his memory an honorable record, among the earliest and most zealous of the Society's Scottish benefactors.

The first anniversary of the Society was now approaching; and the Committee, anxious to appear with advantage before their constituents and the public, unanimously requested their President, whose judicious counsel had so materially aided them in conducting the affairs of the Institution, to draw up the first annual report. With this request his Lordship complied; and the necessary steps having been taken to arrange

all the preparatory measures, the anniversary was celebrated, on Wednesday the 1st of May, 1805, at the New London Tavern, Cheapside; to which place the meetings of the Committee had, in the month of December, 1804, been removed, as being more central and convenient than that in which they had previously been accustomed to meet.

At twelve o'clock the President took the chair, supported by the Bishop of Durham, W. Wilberforce, Esq., and other distinguished characters. His Lordship read the report, which he had prepared at the instance of the Committee, and which had been previously submitted to their approbation. The Bishop of Durham then rose; and, after a frank and energetic declaration of his sentiments in favor of the Society, and a just eulogium on the conduct of the President in devoting so much time, labor, and anxiety, to the direction of the Society's affairs, concluded a speech in which the characters of the Prelate and the Christian were equally sustained, by moving, that the warmest thanks of the meeting should be presented to his Lordship for his faithful, zealous, and persevering attention to the business of the Institution. The proposition was greeted, as were others of a similar import in reference to the several laborers in the various departments of the same common work, with strong demonstrations of approval and regard.

The scene presented on this interesting occa-

sion was distinguished by features which gave it an irresistible influence over the kindest and most elevated affections of the heart. Persons of various communions, circumstances, and stations; the Prelate and the Presbyterian, the Lutheran and the Calvinist, the Peer and the Quaker, here mingled in new and undissembling concord; and, "agreeing in the truth of God's holy word," mutually professed their determination to "live in unity and godly love." Pride and contention, prejudice and bigotry, arrogance on the one part, and contumacy on the other, appeared to have fled before the genius of the Bible. Each individual seemed to feel that the long and disgraceful reign of misunderstanding and hostility among professing Christians was passed away; and many a tear attested the sincerity of that reconciliation which promised to heal the breaches of intestine division, and to unite the heretofore-conflicting members of Christ's holy catholic church, in an indissoluble league of peace, and amity, and cordial co-operation.

CHAPTER III.

1805—6.

THE anniversary meeting, and the distribution of the Report, by which it was was succeeded, appear to have consolidated, in a great degree, the internal resources of the Society, and inspired very animating hopes of its acquiring a considerable ascendant in the public estimation.

The encouragement which had been given to the plan of the Institution, previously to the termination of the first year of its existence, very sensibly augmented, as that plan was more fully developed in practice. Add to this, that the circulation of papers and documents, explanatory of its principles and its effects, caused its nature and tendency to be better understood. In proportion as this was the case, the impression in its favor became more decisively manifest; and testimonies to that purpose continued to accumulate from Christians of different denominations, and from various parts of the United Kingdom.

That flame which had been early kindled in Wales, continued to spread among the inhabitants of the Principality; and the influence of

the Society was attested by the increasing liberality of their contributions, and their warm and growing interest in its prosperity.

From Ireland, under its existing circumstances of comparative ignorance and depression, little was to be expected in the way of direct or pecuniary co-operation. Much, it was thought, would be gained to the common stock of general improvement, if the inhabitants of that country should be roused to a sense of their moral wants, and thus be stimulated to desire a participation of those inestimable benefits which the Society was intended to confer. By the dispersion of intelligence, however partial and limited it may have been, that end was in some measure attained. Already the dawn appeared of that hopeful solicitude which it was felt of so much importance to excite; and we shall soon have occasion to record the evidence of its growth, in effects of the most promising description.

In North Britain the Society had made a successful entrance, within a few months after its formation; and both the Presbytery of Glasgow, and the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, had given, by their public collections through their respective bounds, an unequivocal testimony of their approbation and friendship. These auspicious beginnings were, after a very short interval, succeeded by measures, assuming a still more decisive character, and involving more

completely the suffrages of national opinion. Scarcely had the Society entered upon its second year, when Scotland was seen proclaiming her attachment to the principles of the Institution, by giving publicity and recommendation to its plans in her capital; and that through a medium, calculated above every other to ensure for them extensive acceptance and success. Robert Scott Moncrieff, Esq. was the person to whom the Society stands indebted for having been introduced to so honorable and advantageous a connection. This respectable individual, having proposed to the directors of "the Society in Scotland, incorporated by Royal Charter, for Propagating Christian Knowledge," to patronize and co-operate with the British and Foreign Bible Society; they cordially assented to the proposal, and on the 8th of May issued the following notification in "the Edinburgh Advertiser."

Copy of an Advertisement inserted in the Edinburgh Advertiser for 1805.

BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

"A Society having been lately formed in London with the above designation, under the patronage and direction of some of the highest

dignitaries of the Church of England, and of many other pious and respectable characters, both of the Established Church and Dissenters, in that country, the exclusive object of which is to diffuse the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, by circulating them in the different languages spoken throughout Great Britain and Ireland; and also, according to the extent of its funds, in the languages of foreign countries: "The Committee of Directors of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge," highly approving of the object of this admirable Institution, *which proposes one of the best conceivable means for the speedy and universal diffusion of the Gospel*, and perfectly satisfied with the security which it affords for a wise and faithful application of its funds; have resolved, most cordially to unite their efforts with those of the British and Foreign Bible Society in promoting so desirable an end; and for this purpose, they have appointed the following Gentlemen of their number; viz. the Rev. Dr. Hunter, Mr. Black, and Mr. Jones, Ministers of the Gospel at Edinburgh; Robert Scott Moncrieff, Esq. of New-halls, with the Secretary and Treasurer of the Society; a Sub-Committee, to correspond with the Bible Society in London, and to adopt and pursue such measures as may be thought proper, in order to obtain

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contributions and collections in Scotland, for promoting the great object of that Institution."

The effect of a declaration so explicit, from a quarter of such high respectability, may be easily anticipated. The British and Foreign Bible Society became known and respected throughout Scotland: a foundation was thereby laid in the capital, for a deep and permanent interest in its favor; and a collection on its behalf, throughout the bounds of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, was one of its earliest and most beneficial results. In "the act and recommendation," by which this collection was authorized, and which was dated the 29th of January, 1806, the Presbytery state, that, "having considered the objects of the Society, under the name of the British and Foreign Bible Society, for the purpose of circulating Bibles at home and abroad," they "give their cordial approbation to this Institution, and appoint a collection for this Society to be made in all the Churches and Chapels within their bounds, on Thursday, February 27, being the day appointed by the King, to be observed as a national fast through Scotland, on account of the present state of the Kingdom."

In speaking more particularly of the Society, the Presbytery describe it in the following terms.

"The Society for whose benefit this collection is appointed, was established a few years ago in London; and consists of a large number of respectable men, belonging to the Church of England, and the Dissenters, who are warmly attached to the Christian religion, and the prosperity of their country."

After explaining the occasion of the Society's formation, and the nature, extent, and benefit of its proceedings, the Presbytery thus conclude their candid and liberal appeal.

"Such are the labours of love, in which the Society is engaged; labours most conducive both to the present and eternal interests of their fellow-creatures; and which are admirably fitted, by the blessing of God, for the accomplishment of His promises, 'that the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters do the sea;' 'that the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our God, and of His Christ.'

"Though they have been employing the funds under their management with fidelity and considerable success, there is need of much larger donations for carrying on the extensive and useful purposes of their Institution.

"The Presbytery hope, that enough has been said to show the vast importance of this undertaking, and earnestly recommend to all under their charge, to contribute, as liberally as their

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circumstances will admit, for increasing the funds and usefulness of the Society."

This solemn recognition of a Society in which Bishops presided and Sects co-operated, emanating from bodies whose ecclesiastical constitution renders them almost equally opposed to prelacy and to separation, evinced a spirit of Christian generosity which cannot be too highly commended; the memorial of it will form an honorable record in the religious history of Scotland. The conduct of the Presbytery of Edinburgh on this occasion, viewed in connection with that of the Presbytery of Glasgow, and the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, will sufficiently account for the deep root which the Society will hereafter be found to have taken in the northern part of the Island, and for the luxuriant growth which its interest has continued to experience among all classes and denominations of Scottish Christians.

In England, the effect of those publications which advertised the existence of the Society, announced its proceedings, and invited general co-operation, was also manifested, though by slower degrees, and, for a time, with inferior demonstrations of liberality and zeal. The seed which has since so abundantly sprung up, was destined to be for a considerable period buried under the soil; and although it is true that the augmentation of general contribution was great,

and for the most part annually progressive, yet it is as true, that it required four years to double the amount of the first year's annual subscriptions; the return of the first year from this source being 1,235*l.* 3*s.* that of the fourth, 2,493*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Having glanced at the circumstances which shewed the growing strength of the Institution, and its progress in the acquisition of domestic support, the author will now resume the narrative of its public transactions.

The intercourse maintained with the German Bible Society at Nurenberg, had led, as will be recollected, to a correspondence of an interesting nature with a Roman Catholic Clergyman in Swabia; and the event of it had been, the grant of 1000 copies of the Nurenberg Protestant New Testament to that individual, for circulation at his discretion.

In the mean time, the zeal of some enlightened Roman Catholics at Ratisbon, having been excited by the proceedings of the Protestants at Nurenberg, the example of the latter was imitated by the former; and a Roman Catholic Bible Society was established at Ratisbon, under the direction of the Rev. Mr. Wittman, Director of the Ecclesiastical Seminary in that place.

The Director's Address to the Christians of the Roman Catholic persuasion, throughout Germany, is peculiarly simple, liberal, and devout.

" TO THOSE WHO VALUE THE DOCTRINE OF JESUS.

" Dear Brethren and Sisters in Christ!

" It is desirable that the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament might be put into the hands of many pious Christians at a low price. Thereby they would be comforted in their afflictions, strengthened in their trials, and more preserved from the temptations of the world. Many excellent persons do not find, in the public religious instruction, that for which they hunger; they are also often in the confessional only judged for their outward deeds, without being led to an acknowledgment of their inward corruption, and to faith in the blood of Jesus their Redeemer: if these could read the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament in the quiet time of holidays, their faith in the simple doctrines from the mouth of Jesus Christ would, by the mercy of their Saviour, be thereby enlivened; and the Lord's gifts in the Holy Spirit be quickened in them. They would hear the voice of the Father in their inward part, drawing them to their Saviour, of which Christ saith: ' They shall be all taught of God; and whosoever hath learned of the Father, and receiveth it, cometh unto me.' John vi. 44. (German Translation.)

" Also Christian brethren and sisters could meet together in small parties of two or three on Sunday and holiday afternoons, and read a chapter in the New Testament, and confer together on it, whereby a subject of short united prayer would impress itself on their minds, and what the Lord saith would be fulfilled: ' If two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father in heaven." Matt. xviii. 19. Christians! you are so unlike the world, you are regarded as nothing by it; it has no satisfaction in you, and you also can gain none from it; and when you are for having here and there a little fellowship with it, then it causes disquiet to your spirits, and you soon find yourselves in the like state with Peter, when he was among the people in the hall. Be ye separated then, and let it be as the Lord saith: ' There shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.' Luke xii. 52. But be ye so much the more united together in the Lord, in joint prayer, and in comfort of the words of Christ.

" From these considerations has arisen, in the the minds of some clergymen, a wish to set on foot a cheap German edition of the New Testatament, for the use of many pious Christians, the Repository thereof to be at Ratisbon, in the Ecclesiastical Seminary, as a central place in

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Germany, and to wait for what the Lord may be pleased farther to work therein.

" I hereby give this intelligence to some known confessors of Christ, with a request that they will consider the matter before the Lord, recommend it to him in prayer; and if he is pleased to afford them an opportunity to contribute in any way toward it, they will not neglect it. *Christian poverty and love have accomplished greater things in the world than the power and riches of the world could do.*

" O Lord! Redeemer of our souls! Shepherd of the small despised flock! Do with this work as may please thee. Thy kingdom proceeds an incessant pace in a still small way; and those who oppose it can do nothing against it, but become thy footstool, and contribute to the rest of thy feet in the peace of thy people. If it please thee, let thy holy history, the history of thy childhood, of thy ministry, of thy suffering, and of the victory in the Holy Spirit in the apostles and firstlings of the Christian church, come into the hands of thy little ones for their comfort and confirmation.

(Signed) WITTMAN."

Scarcely had this Institution been formed, when the Roman Catholic Clergyman before referred to made application to the Nurenberg

Society, for permission to commute the 1000 Protestant Testaments which he was to have received from their depository, for an equal number of Catholic Testaments from the proposed depository at Ratisbon. The Nurenberg Society, regarding the application as perfectly reasonable, and not foreseeing that any objection would lie against its admission, yielded a ready compliance to the wishes of the applicant; and transferred the order from their own to the Ratisbon Society, without deeming it necessary to wait till the sense of the parties from whom the grant had proceeded could be taken upon the subject.

To the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society this measure appeared to be one which, from its novelty, and the consequences with which it was pregnant, called for very grave and deliberate consideration. Immediately on the receipt of a direct communication from the Roman Catholic Clergyman, conveying the request which he had made to the Nurenberg Society, and stating the success with which that request had been attended, a resolution was passed, declaring, that the proposal to exchange the order of 1000 Protestant Testaments for an equal number of Catholic Testaments could not be acceded to.

The effect of this resolution, the wisdom of which, under the peculiar circumstances of the

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British and Foreign Bible Society, could not be questioned, was painfully felt and affectingly represented by the Nurenberg Society, whose somewhat precipitate, though certainly well-intended procedure, had placed both themselves, and the conductors of the British and Foreign Bible Society, in a situation of great embarrassment. The former pleaded, in justification of the course they had ventured to pursue, the accommodation which it had afforded to the Catholic Clergyman, by relieving him from the difficulties which he must have experienced in an attempt to distribute, to any extent, among members of his own communion, copies of the Protestant Testament. They further stated, that the catholic edition to which the order had been transferred, would be printed, not from a slavish translation of the Vulgate, but from Mr. Schwarzel's version of the original Greek, without note or comment, a version which, while it satisfied enlightened Catholics, had been favorably received by Protestants themselves.

The Committee, while they sympathized with the feelings of their Nurenberg friends, and saw much in their statement to atone for the precipitation with which they had acted, considered it expedient, after a full and dispassionate investigation of the subject, to confirm their first resolution. Desirous, however, of upholding the credit of the Nurenberg Society, which had be-

come pledged by this transaction, and anxious to prevent the charge of illiberality from being brought against the British and Foreign Bible Society with any semblance of reason, several Members of the Committee united, in their private capacity, to defray the charge of the 1000 Testaments ordered at Ratisbon: while the Catholic Clergyman, having accepted, with grateful acquiescence, the fulfilment of the Society's original intention, continued to retain his claim for the Ratisbon copies; and thus became, in the event, doubly endowed.

The author has been studiously particular in relating the circumstances of this transaction, because they serve to illustrate the cautious prudence, and conscientious exactitude, with which the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society have been accustomed to act. It will appear, from what has been stated, how careful they were, in this instance, (as they will be found to have been in every similar trial,) to guard against being carried away by their best feelings, and by the tempting prospect of an immediate good, so as to adopt a measure which might, by however forced a construction, be interpreted into a violation of the letter or the spirit of their regulations. The Society was, at this time, in its infancy: its relations with the Protestant churches of Christendom were but recently entered into, and partially formed: the

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prejudices existing against Roman Catholics, and every thing which pertained to them, were in their greatest strength; and the version in question, though respectably vouched for, was yet very defectively known and accredited. These considerations were sufficient to recommend and to justify extreme caution on the part of the Society, lest an error, in so early a stage of its proceedings, might draw its principles into suspicion, and throw obstacles in the way of its future movements, which no exertions of prudence or energy would afterwards enable it completely to surmount.

For the Roman Catholic Clergyman himself, it is due to his character to observe, that he behaved throughout the business in a manner which reflected the highest credit both upon his integrity and his candor. His letters breathed the spirit of fervent piety and genuine catholicism; and with an appropriate and animated extract from one of them the account of this transaction shall be closed.

"I feel the highest regard for the wise and prudent zeal of the English Bible Committee, because it is my own desire to see the pure and genuine Word of God spread, and I am so entirely against all corruption of this invaluable treasure, that I myself would prevent it by all means in my power. As THE DEGENERACY OF ALL OUTWARD CHURCHES IS SO GREAT AND

GENERAL, AND THREATENS TO BECOME STILL GREATER AND MORE GENERAL, I COMFORT MYSELF WITH THIS, THAT THE LORD IS RETIRING INTO THE INNER TEMPLE, AND MORE GLORIOUSLY BUILDING UP THE INVISIBLE CHURCH. AT LEAST HE DOES NOT SIT IDLE AT THE RIGHT HAND OF HIS FATHER, NOR CAN HE LOSE HIS SUIT; WHATEVER MAY NOW BE THE APPEARANCE, HE MUST FINALLY BE THE GAINER. OUR DUTY HOWEVER IS THIS, TO PRAY MORE EARNESTLY THAN EVER: 'LET THY KINGDOM COME!' AND, 'LORD, ABIDE WITH US, FOR IT IS TOWARDS EVENING.' Dr. Sailer (who by his truly evangelical instructions and writings has proved a great blessing to the Roman Catholics in Germany) thus expresses himself in his last book: 'Christianity is so firmly founded on its own basis, that, after it has outlived the times of persecution, after it has remained unshaken in the age of superstition, it will also outlive this age of infidelity and contempt.' Therefore, we cannot sufficiently rejoice that we are privileged to serve such a Master, who is infinitely superior to all his enemies; who has the victory in his hands, ever since the world has stood; who finally shall put all enemies under his feet; at whose name every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord."

The progress made by the Nurenberg Society in maturing its plans, and recommending its

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design to the patronage of the public, though neither rapid, nor at any time considerable, appears, on the whole, to have afforded its conductors a reasonable degree of satisfaction and encouragement. A detailed account of the first anniversary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, expressly translated and printed for the purpose, was circulated with great industry, both in Nurenberg and its vicinity; and produced, it was thought, a very advantageous effect.

Having, towards the close of 1805, completed the first impression of their Testament on standing types, the Nurenberg Society announced its completion, in a printed Address, and solicited assistance from their German fellow-christians, in order to enable them to print the entire Bible in a similar manner. In the course of their Address they advert, with sentiments of respect, to the Roman Catholic Bible Institution at Ratisbon, and manifest a fraternal disposition towards its Members; which evinces the conciliatory influence of a love for the word of God, and of a sincere desire to promote its general diffusion.

"The printing of this New Testament" (they state) "was delayed by several circumstances, one of which will afford pleasure to every friend of the Bible. The very same person, who had to cast the types for our New Testament, received, nearly at the same time, an order to cast

the types for another New Testament, which is to be printed for the use of Roman Catholic Christians, under the direction of some very worthy and truly enlightened Clergymen of that persuasion."

This good understanding between Protestants and Catholics in a cause, which, judging from past experience, might have been considered likely to generate very different feelings, was considered at the time an auspicious circumstance: and it may now be referred to, as marking the dawn of that era in which Catholics and Protestants have reciprocated expressions of kindness; and, either by actual co-operation, or by amicable competition, have mutually conspired to promote the distribution of the Scriptures among all orders and classes of people.

The Address, while it did justice, as we have seen, to the zeal of the Catholics at Ratisbon, reported also, in terms of due commendation, the warm encouragement given to the designs of the Nurenberg Society by the Protestants in different parts of Germany and Switzerland. Instances were cited of individual liberality, which testified how much the hearts of the people were alive to the interests of vital religion, and how seasonably the work of diffusing the Holy Scriptures was introduced among them. A venerable old man, whom Providence had raised from small beginnings to a state of competency, is described as

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having presented, with tears of pious gratitude, two sums of 1,100 florins each; one in aid of the missionary cause, and the other for the purpose of circulating the word of God among his German countrymen. Another, who had served forty years in a very respectable family, and saved a considerable sum of money, which he was accustomed to devote almost entirely to benevolent purposes, is stated to have brought 300 florins, "as a gift of love, to be employed solely for the printing and distribution of Bibles." To these interesting facts—interesting the rather, as being the first fruits of those exertions which were afterwards remunerated with so plentiful a harvest—were added assurances, "that in several parts of Switzerland, and chiefly in the Canton of Bern, a similar zeal had been manifested; and that the inhabitants both of town and country, strove with each other in offering their mites to the Bible Institution."

Such demonstrations of earnestness and industry in the conductors of the Nurenberg Bible Society, and of zeal and liberality in its members and friends, were observed by the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society with great and increasing satisfaction. Nurenberg was the portion of continental ground in which they had begun their foreign labors. To that spot, for a period, their operations were confined. It was, in fact the cradle of their continental greatness;

and they watched over it with a fondness which disposed them to rejoice in every indication of present advancement, and every presage of future success.

To the 100*l.* originally contributed at the formation of the Society in that place, the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society had recently added a second donation of 200*l.* in aid of an impression of the entire Bible on standing types, or stereotype, as circumstances might determine. The intelligence conveyed through the address just referred to, confirmed the expectation upon which the second grant had been made; the Committee, who had voted it, saw their judgment of the zeal and perseverance of their Nurenberg friends abundantly confirmed; and from what they had witnessed in the trial thus made, they felt encouraged to proceed to still further exertions, satisfied, that if they were but diligent to plant and to water, God would give the desired—the promised increase.

By this time, the communication opened with Halle in Saxony began to take effect; and by means of it, a channel was obtained through which it was hoped, and as events have since shown, not without reason, that the stream of divine truth might be beneficially directed to numerous portions of the continent, in which its refreshing waters were deeply and affectingly needed: Dr. Knapp, Director of the Orphan-

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House in that city, gave a friendly reception to the overture made by the Society in the summer of 1804; and, in return, invited their attention to the depository over which he presided, and in which a stock of Bibles and Testaments existed, ready for immediate distribution.

The Canstein Bible Institution, the depository here alluded to, was founded at Halle, in 1710, by Charles Hildebrand, Baron de Canstein; at his decease, the care of it devolved upon the celebrated Professor Franke, founder and director of the Orphan-House in that city; and passing in succession to the several directors of that charitable establishment, it thus came under the administration of the Rev. Dr. Knapp. The Institution had now subsisted for a period of nearly ninety-five years, during which time above three million copies, either of the whole Bible or New Testament, had been printed in different languages, and dispersed, not only throughout most of the European countries, but even through different parts of America and the Russian colonies in Asia: many thousand copies had, through this medium of dispersion, been distributed gratuitously to the poor; and there was evidence of the most unquestionable nature, that a signal blessing had attended the whole undertaking.

The Bibles and Testaments issued by this excellent Institution were printed in the city of Halle till the year 1735, when it obtained from

Frederick William the privilege of being permitted to establish a printing-office of its own. In consequence of this indulgence, a very large building was annexed to the Orphan-House, in which Bibles are continually printing in such numbers, that, to use the language of the Society's correspondent, "there is always a large supply ready for sale." Dr. Knapp, from whose communications these particulars have been derived, accompanied his statement with an assurance, that "if the British and Foreign Bible Society should be disposed to make use of the Bible Institution, for the attainment of their noble and benevolent designs, he would feel exceedingly happy to execute their orders."

Advantage was immediately taken of this intelligence; and as Dr. Knapp appeared to possess both the means and the disposition to co-operate effectually with the views of the Society, he was requested to furnish distinct information on the following points: 1st. In what places the Scriptures were wanted in the several languages in which the Canstein Institution had printed and continued to print them; 2dly. By what mode the British and Foreign Bible Society might assist in the distribution of them. To these inquiries, which had for their principal object to ascertain the state of the Scriptures, both as to the want of them and the facilities for dispersing them in Prussia, Poland, and the Russian empire, Dr.

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Knapp paid a kind and ready attention; and the train into which he put them, elicited, in process of time, such information as enabled the conductors of the Society to extend their connections, and to form new links of communication with persons and places, to which, but for this introduction, they might not have found so easy and effectual an access.

While things were thus proceeding at Nurenberg, and Halle, measures had been concerted by the Society's correspondents at Berlin, with the prosperous result of which it will now be proper that the reader should be made acquainted.

The Rev. John Jænické, stimulated by the example of Nurenberg, and encouraged by the generous proposal of the British and Foreign Bible Society, exerted himself with so much judgment and perseverance, that the foundation of a Bible Society was laid in Berlin, in the commencement of 1806, under the direction of some noblemen and other persons of great distinction and exemplary character. On the 11th of February, the Institution received the sanction of His Prussian Majesty; and on the 31st of March, the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society redeemed their pledge, by voting to the newly-formed Institution the promised sum of 100*l.*; adding a further donation to an equal amount, as an inducement to the Berlin Bible

Society to extend their labors, at that time employed in printing the Bohemian Bible, to an impression of the Polish Bible, the want of which was understood to be severely and extensively felt.

The establishment of the Berlin Bible Society was, in the infant circumstances of the British and Foreign Bible Society, regarded as an acquisition of considerable moment. The importance of its situation, the zeal of its directors, and the authority of the royal sanction under which it appeared before the public, gave it altogether an imposing aspect; and naturally induced very high expectations of its future greatness and success.

Of this Institution, which, though (as it has since appeared) scarcely known in the capital from which it derived its designation, and very partially supported in other parts of the kingdom, contrived, chiefly through the exertions of a single individual,* to print 20,000 copies of the Bible and New Testament in the Bohemian and Polish languages; to promote similar exertions in various other places; and to keep alive likewise an interest in favor of the Holy Scriptures, till an Establishment was effected for extending their circulation throughout the whole Prussian dominions. Of an Institution so wisely planned, so zealously conducted, and so happily super-

* The Rev. J. Jænické.

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seded, it will be interesting to trace the origin, and to follow the labors till they reached their consummation. The latter of these objects will have its place in the details which are hereafter to be recorded. Of the former something has already been said: what remains to be told, may be very suitably extracted from the excellent "Address" issued by the Berlin Bible Society soon after it formation, and inscribed: "To the Christians of the Prussian States."

"In that highly-favored country, where, for a considerable time past, the spirit of active Christian charity has been awakened, and a fire kindled by the Lord, which already shines into the remotest parts of the earth--in the powerful kingdom of Great Britain, a Society has been formed, consisting of all ranks and religious denominations, for the laudable purpose of propagating the word of God to the utmost of their power, by cheap distribution among the poor.

"No fire burns upon the altar of the Lord, without spreading its flames around. This fire has also extended its flames. The zeal of Christians in England has also infused itself into the hearts of Christians in Germany.

"Already in the German Empire a Society has been formed, actuated by the same spirit, and for the same purpose, as that in England. In the Prussian States, also, there is still room for sowing the good seed of the word of God. They

still contain districts, where, in the houses of many poor Protestant families, the precious Bible is sought in vain. A number of sincere friends of God and of mankind, in and out of Berlin, constrained by the love of Christ and of their fellow-christians, have associated, after the example of the above-mentioned English and German Bible Societies, to collect a fund for the purpose of purchasing Bibles and New Testaments from the Bible Institution at Halle, to be gratuitously distributed, or sold at a very low price, to the really poor in the Prussian States. They also intend to publish a new edition of the Bohemian Bible: a donation of 100*l.* which has been voted them by the Bible Society in London for this purpose, laid the foundation of this fund, which has since been augmented by the benevolent contributions of several voluntary subscribers of all ranks."

Mr. Jænické's letter to the King of Prussia, and his Majesty's reply, will complete this account.

TO THE KING OF PRUSSIA.

"Most mighty and most gracious Lord and Sovereign,

"With all due humility I lay the inclosed address at the foot of your royal throne. Moved by the present falling away from our Lord Jesus

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Christ, and the increasing contempt of the Holy Scriptures, several of your Majesty's faithful subjects have united together for the purpose of putting the Holy Bible into the hands of the poor, particularly of the soldiers' children. From my office of distributing meat to the poor during the last five years, I have had a frequent opportunity of observing the deplorable ignorance of the poor in the great truths of salvation. And as in the dominions of your Majesty, particularly in Silesia, there are several Bohemian Colonies, part of which stand in need of the Bohemian Bible, which can be procured neither from the Bible Institution of the Hallish Orphan-House nor in Bohemia itself; our Bible Society has determined not only to purchase German Bibles for distribution among the poor, but also to print a new edition of the Bohemian Bible here in Berlin; the more so, as several Protestant clergymen in Bohemia have already subscribed for 1000 copies.

"Our Society will also consult some zealous ministers in Prussia, whether the Polish Bible could not be printed either in Königsberg or Dantzig, in order to distribute it among the Protestants of South Prussia.

"As your Majesty will perceive by this statement, that our Bible Society has the eternal welfare of our fellow-men for its object, we feel the greater confidence in addressing your Ma-

jesty, hoping that it will please your Majesty to take it under your most gracious protection, which we most humbly solicit.

" I am your Majesty's most humble and most dutiful servant and subject,

Feb. 7, 1806. " JOHN JÆNICKÉ."

REPLY OF HIS PRUSSIAN MAJESTY.

" It is with real satisfaction that I discover, from your letter of the 7th of February and the inclosed Address, the laudable endeavours of the Prussian Bible Society for the gratuitous and cheap distribution of the Bible to the poor of my dominions; and while I render justice to your particular merit in promoting such a useful Institution, I transmit to you at the same time 20 Frederick d'ors, as an addition to its funds.

" I am your gracious King,

" FREDERICK WILLIAM."

Feb. 11, 1806.

Such were the fruits of the intercourse maintained by the British and Foreign Bible Society with the continent of Europe, antecedently to the termination of its second year. They constitute a part of that day of small things, which prudence forbids us to despise, and gratitude to forget. Compared with the splendid occurrences by which they have been succeeded they sink into disesteem, and can scarcely be rescued

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from the reproach of insignificance. But the recital of them was due to the credit of those exertions by which they were produced, and to the elucidation of those transactions for which they prepared the way. In themselves, it is trusted, they are not wholly without interest; but they become additionally interesting, when considered as preserving a memorial of the first blushes of that rising light, which now shines with so great effulgence on the principal nations of the European continent.

The progress which the cause of the British and Foreign Bible Society had made in the affairs of its foreign department was greeted by its conductors, and by all to whom the intelligence of its proceedings was imparted, with expressions of cordial delight. In the mean time, the wants of Great Britain were neither forgotten, nor lightly considered. Much exertion was made to accelerate the production of some fruits from the stereotype press, in order that the desirable business of distribution might commence among the necessitous part of the British population. This object was obtained in September, 1805, when an impression of an octavo English Testament was announced as ready for delivery. As this Testament exhibited the first specimen of the application of stereotype to any part of the Holy Scriptures, and was beside the first article provided by the British and Foreign Bible Society

for home circulation, a resolution was passed, at the meeting in which its completion was reported, that a copy of it, accompanied with a circular letter, should be presented to the President, the Vice-Presidents, each Member of the Committee, and Principal Officers of the Society. This measure, it was thought, while it evinced a due respect for the parties to whom it referred, would afford, at the same time, a satisfactory testimony, that the copies issued in the languages of the United Kingdom would be—what the fundamental rule had stipulated they should be—"the authorized version without note or comment."

With a view to identify the copies issued by the Society, and thereby to prevent, as far as possible, any fraud upon its charity by mercenary artifices, or any other of the various modes of abuse, the Society's imprint was inserted in the title page, and its designation stamped upon the binding. The latter of these expedients has since been adopted by other Societies of reputation, both at home and abroad;* and both have been mentioned as evidences of that discreet and precautionary management, which, in the warmth of its zeal for diffusing the Scriptures, the Institution has not failed from its very outset to exemplify and observe.

* Among these may be particularly mentioned—*at home*, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; and *abroad*, the Petersburg (now Russian) Bible Society.

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An impression of the New Testament having thus been prepared, the work of distribution commenced without delay; and Ireland, whose wants were deemed the most urgent, and were also at that time the best ascertained, was the first scene in which it was carried into effect. Individual agents, and Sunday schools were the medium through which the copies transmitted for this purpose, were put in circulation. The Dublin Association was also assisted, as were subsequently the Naval and Military Bible Society in London, and certain other religious Institutions; by being permitted to share with the British and Foreign Bible Society in its advantageous arrangements with the University of Cambridge: and every opportunity was eagerly embraced of supplying, both directly, and indirectly, the scriptural wants of the country, and of exciting attention to the importance of reading and dispersing the lively oracles of God.

One of the earliest, and most beneficial results from the distribution in Ireland, combined with other exertions of a similar description in that country, was the establishment of a Bible Society at Dublin. Of this Institution,—small in its commencement, and subsisting for a period with very limited countenance and equivocal support; but now possessing distinguished patronage, and operating with ample means, and through a wide and still widening jurisdiction,—occasion will

hereafter be furnished for speaking at large. The author will content himself at present with explaining briefly the circumstances of its origin, and the conduct observed by the British and Foreign Bible Society in accepting a connection with it.

But as the Dublin Association, to which reference has before been made, contributed materially to excite that spirit which caused the Scriptures to be so eagerly inquired for, and their distribution to be so seriously considered, it will be proper to introduce the proposed explanation, by laying before the reader a compendious account of that Patriotic Institution, which was the precursor in this field of usefulness, and prepared the way, by its laudable exertions, for the establishment of that national Bible Society, the circumstances of whose origin are hereafter to be related.

In the year 1792, a Society was formed in Dublin, under the title of "The Association for Discountenancing Vice, and Promoting the Knowledge and Practice of the Christian Religion." Stimulated by a splendid donation from an unknown benefactor, for encouraging the distribution of the Scriptures, they resolved to make that a principal object of their attention; and, in this determination, with a zeal which cannot be too highly commended, they expressed their hope, in a printed Address, "*that effectual provision would*

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be made, that no house, no cabin, in the whole kingdom, in which there was a single person who could read, should be destitute of the Holy Scriptures." The members of this "Association, which at its commencement in October, 1792, amounted to only *three*, had, in 1794, increased to 240; and so vigorously had they exerted themselves in prosecution of their end, that, in 1795, we find them addressed by the Rev. Dr. Burrowes, in the following terms:

"You have distributed quarto* Bibles for the use of families. You have put it in the power of fathers to instruct their children in Christian knowledge from the words of Christ himself—to draw the stream of morals and life from the fountain-head, even the rock of your salvation: and you have deposited in many houses, where perhaps it is the only book, the very best book which can be had."†

In 1796, the Association report, through the Rev. Dr. Magee, that "the dissemination of the Holy Scriptures had gone on with rapidity, and that every Bible of 4,500 (which were all that could be procured from Messrs. Rivington, in

* It is due to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, to observe, that these quarto Bibles, amounting to 650, were obtained from their depository: and the same Society, greatly to their honor, presented the Association in 1801, with 1,450 Bibles.

† Anniversary Sermon before the Association.

London, being their whole stock,) would have been disposed of long since, if the subscribers had not found it prudent to abate in their exertions."

So strongly did the Directors of the Association feel themselves pressed by increasing applications, that, in 1801, they addressed the public generally on the subject; and made a forcible appeal, in a similar strain, to "the Irish absentees, and particularly to the proprietors of landed estates, who answered to that description." In 1802, they reported, that the Scriptures "were received with avidity, and sought after:" and we have had their declaration in 1804, as expressed in the letter transmitted to the British and Foreign Bible Society, that "the demand daily increased;"* accompanied, at the same time, with the important confession, "that the funds of the Association were unable to supply it."

In such a state of mutual excitement towards the possession and the distribution of the Holy Scriptures, an excitement which had spread from the Protestants to not a few members of the Roman Catholic Church, the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society was

* In a letter addressed to the British and Foreign Bible Society, dated October 11, 1804, the Secretaries, after stating the account of books distributed by the Association in the preceding year, add, that "*the demand for them is progressively and rapidly increasing.*"

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made known throughout Ireland; and produced in many parts, as was natural, a desire to associate on a similar principle, and to promote the creation of separate means for the exclusive distribution of the Holy Scriptures. "The Dublin Association" had unquestionably done much; but had demonstrated, by its confession, that it was utterly unable to do every thing which the wants of the people (wants at that time very defectively known) imperatively required. With a decided preference on the part of its managers to the distribution of the Holy Scriptures, as a mean of Christian instruction,* the very constitution of

* The following passages (the first of which has in part been quoted before) show how strongly the Managers of the Association were attached to the distribution of the Scriptures; and how differently they thought on their *intelligibility to the common people*, from many who have written against the British and Foreign Bible Society.

"We acknowledge" (says the Address) "with satisfaction and gratitude, the valuable labors of those who defend Christianity by the weapons of argument. But we venture to assert, that the most popular, as well as the most effectual defence of Christianity, must ever consist in the exhibition of its own native beauties, as seen in the clear mirror of GOD'S WORD. It is obvious, that, to the lower classes in particular, an elaborate detail of the various evidences of the Christian religion must in most instances be uninteresting and unsuitable. They have neither the time, nor the habits necessary for receiving conviction in this way. But the man of narrowest capacity, who has only common sense and common honesty, will scarcely fail, in perusing the Bible itself, to discover at once that the rules which it lays down tend directly to make

the Association suggested, and to a certain degree prescribed, the application of a proportion of its funds, to other means, as co-operating to produce the same general end. It was therefore considered, that such an Institution, however excellent and useful, could not be expected to concentrate sufficient force upon this paramount object, the circulation of the Scriptures; and the public good appeared to demand, that its exertions in this department should be assisted by some competent auxiliary, expressly directed to the accomplishment of this single and separate design.

The parties on whose minds this impression had been made, were at first disposed to seek the attainment of their object, by forming a personal alliance with the British and Foreign Bible Society, and by exerting themselves vigorously to raise subscriptions in aid of its funds. But they had not advanced far in the execution of their purpose, when it occurred to them, that a similar Institution established in Dublin, and directed immediately to the supply of their own population, would excite more attention, raise larger contributions, and bring into action a greater variety of useful instruments than could

him good and happy:—he will recognize in it a language speaking immediately to the heart, and conveying an intrinsic and almost irresistible evidence of sincerity and truth."

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be expected from the exertions of individuals, forming merely a fractional part of a Society whose operations were conducted in London, and whose funds composed a common stock for the spiritual benefit of the whole human race. It was therefore judged expedient, that a distinct Bible Society should be constituted in Dublin, for the service of Ireland; and such an Institution was accordingly established.

With these sentiments and views very candidly unfolded in a printed address, "The Dublin Bible Society" announced, through an official communication, its actual establishment; and respectfully solicited the countenance and aid of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Acting on that system of cautious procedure by which their conduct has been invariably governed, the Committee in London abstained from pledging themselves to any thing which might be construed into a recognition of the new Society, till they should have become satisfied, that it was definitively constituted on principles similar to their own. The point, on which satisfaction was particularly required, and which was explained in a friendly correspondence, regarded the express restriction of the copies to be circulated to those of the *authorized version*. A clause to that effect having been proposed and adopted at a Special General Meeting, "The Dublin Bible Society" was distinctly recognized by the British and

Foreign Bible Society as an allied Institution; and an intercourse immediately commenced, which, through many vicissitudes of discouragement and obstruction, has ripened at length into a well-understood and satisfactory connection.

To this account, in which the Dublin Association, and the Hibernian Bible Society are mutually implicated, it may be useful to add the following expression of the sentiments of the former, on the absolute duty of circulating the Bible; inasmuch as, while it reflects honor on *one* Institution, it serves as a justification of the practice of *both*.

"The advantage which the Bible possesses—of being the irrefragable manifestation of God's will to his rational creatures, raises it, with respect to practical efficacy, infinitely above all that ever came from the pen of man; and makes it a means of working on the public mind, of such invaluable importance, as to render it doubtful, *whether they who neglect to give it the utmost possible circulation, are more impious or impolitic—more insensible to their own interests, or more ungrateful to their God.*"*

The attention of the British and Foreign Bible Society was, about this time, excited to the consideration of the Gaelic Scriptures. Representations were transmitted from persons of credibility, stating, that, in the Highlands of

* Address to the Proprietors of Irish Estates, &c.

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Scotland, very few persons were in possession of a complete Bible; that among those who possessed a single volume of the four in which the Scriptures had been published, the proportion did not exceed one in forty; that the price of a complete copy was beyond the ability of the poor to purchase it; and that, in fact, it was not easily procurable at any price. It was added, that, in the island of Sky, containing about 15,000 persons, scarcely one Gaelic Bible was to be found.

It further appeared, on the authenticity of an Address, delivered in May, 1803, by the Secretary to the "Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge," that, "out of 335,000 persons in the Highlands, 300,000 were considered not to understand any other language than the Gaelic, so far at least as to comprehend a book written, or a continued discourse."

This information was of a nature to awaken the most lively concern in the breast of the Committee. It was immediately felt, that an attempt ought to be made to answer the wants and the desires of a people so truly deserving of compassion and relief. But, before any step could be practically adopted, it was requisite, that two preliminary points should be distinctly and satisfactorily ascertained:

1. Whether the edition at that time printing under the direction of "the Society in Scot-

land for Propagating Christian Knowledge" would be deemed sufficient; and,

2. Whether, in the event of another edition being required, the British and Foreign Bible Society, in the present state of its funds and its engagements, were competent to undertake it.

A correspondence was therefore opened with the Board of the Society in Scotland, in order to obtain the necessary materials for the formation of a just opinion upon the subject. The final result of this correspondence was a determination, on the part of the British and Foreign Bible Society, to print a new edition af the Gaelic Bible for the use of the Highlanders, and to employ, for that purpose, the text accredited and used by the venerable Society to which the reference had been made.

The version, which constituted this text, had been effected with singular care; and was recommended by testimonies to its fidelity and accuracy which entitled it to the highest respect. That portion of it which contained the New Testament, was the production of the Rev. James Stewart, Minister of Killin; and was printed at the expense of the above Society, in 1767; previously to which era, no part of the Holy Scriptures had appeared in a Gaelic dress. In 1802, under the auspices, and at the expense, of the same Society, the Old Testament was published. Three parts out of four into which this portion of the Bible had been divided, were

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rendered from the Hebrew, with great simplicity, and with as literal an adherence to the original text as the idiom of the respective languages would admit. In the fourth part, executed by another hand, the style was described as receding from this simplicity; and the literal and plain interpretation was said to have been exchanged for the free and elevated. This division, therefore, of the sacred text, was judiciously placed under correction by the Scottish Society; and the probability was, from the measures they adopted, and the standard of translation which they professed to observe, that the version, when finally completed, would approach as nearly to perfection, as human wisdom and perseverance could advance it.

Such was the text, from which the proposed impression of the British and Foreign Bible Society was to be printed; and it deserves to be recorded to the honor of the Directors of "the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge," that, when addressed on the subject of the Gaelic Scriptures, though occupied themselves in preparing an edition, they did not betray any symptoms of selfishness or jealousy, but generously imparted the desired information; furnished a copy of the Old Testament, as soon as it left the press, for the use of the printer employed by the British and Foreign Bible Society; and expressed their perfect readiness to redeem "the pledge they

had given of cordial co-operation," and "to afford every facility" to the measures of a Society in which they professed to take a lively interest, and whose success they wished to promote to the utmost of their power."

So much may suffice to acquaint the reader with the origin and the course of the Society's proceedings, in reference to their edition of the Gaelic Bible for the use of the Scottish Highlanders; and it will appear in the sequel, that both the determination to print an impression, and the choice of the particular text, were satisfactorily and decisively confirmed.

It may not be amiss, before taking leave of this subject, to observe, that it was the translation of the New Testament by the Rev. Mr. Stewart, as above described, which, upon a question being moved in the Assembly of the Church of Scotland about the propriety of printing it, occasioned the celebrated vindicatory letter from the pen of the late Dr. Johnson; and, as that letter, besides answering by anticipation the principal objection against the British and Foreign Bible Society, contains the wisest and most liberal sentiments, expressed in the strongest and most dignified language, no apology will be necessary for introducing an extract from it in this connection.

August 3, 1766.

"I did not expect to hear, that it could be, in an Assembly convened for the propagation of

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Christian knowledge, a question, whether any nation, uninstructed in religion, should receive instruction; or whether that instruction should be imparted to them by a translation of the holy books into their own language. If obedience to the will of God be necessary to happiness, and knowledge of his will be necessary to obedience, I know not how he that withholds this knowledge, or denies it, can be said to love his neighbour as himself. He that voluntarily continues ignorant, is guilty of all the crimes which ignorance produces; as to him that should extinguish the tapers of a light-house, might justly be imputed the calamities of shipwreck. Christianity is the highest perfection of humanity; and as no man is good but as he wishes the good of others, no man can be good in the highest degree, who wishes not to others the largest measures of the greatest good. *To omit for a year, or for a day, the most efficacious method of advancing Christianity, in compliance with any purposes that terminate on this side of the grave, is a crime of which I know not that the world has yet had an example,* except in the practice of the planters in America, a race of mortals, whom, I suppose, no other man wishes to resemble." The conclusion is as follows: "Let it, however, be remembered that the efficacy of ignorance has long been tried, and has not produced the consequence expected. Let

knowledge, therefore, take its turn; and let the patrons of privation stand awhile aside, and admit the operation of positive principles. You will be pleased, Sir, to assure the worthy man who is employed in the new translation, that he has my wishes for his success; and if here, or at Oxford, I can be of any use, that I shall think it more than honor to promote his undertaking."

Shortly after the business of the Gaelic Bible had been taken up, the case of the numerous Prisoners of War was brought under the Society's consideration, and excited a very lively sympathy in their favor, and a strong disposition to administer to their relief. Little concern had hitherto been shown by any religious Institution for the spiritual accommodation of that unfortunate class of individuals. Separated from their country and their natural connections, and arrested in their career of professional duty, they had to suffer all the hardships of bondage and privation in an enemy's country, and that, in many cases, for a conduct which would have entitled them to respect and remuneration in their own. The very circumstances which so honorably discriminated them from other subjects of confinement, and rendered their case more deserving of compassion, placed them at the same time at a still greater distance from the means and the prospect of relief.

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At the period when the Society first turned its attention to this matter, the number of French, Spanish, and Dutch prisoners, was very considerable; scarcely less than 30,000. Their condition was no sooner laid open than it was unanimously determined to meet the deplorable want of the Scriptures which prevailed among them, by a prompt and adequate remedy. In the spirit of this determination, an order was made on the 23d of December, 1805, to print an impression both of the Spanish Testament, and the French Bible; and, by a subsequent resolution on the 2d of February, 1806, it was directed, that the latter, for which very large demands were likely to arise, should be printed by the more commodious and efficient mode of stereotype. Inasmuch, however, as it did not consist with the views or the practice of the Society, to delay doing any thing till every thing could be accomplished, recourse was had to temporary expedients, in the interval of preparing for a regular and permanent supply. Instructions, therefore, were issued for purchasing French Testaments to the amount of 100*l.*; and as Spanish Testaments were not be procured on any terms, the difficulty was provided for by causing an extra number of copies of the Gospels to be printed, in order that they might be put into distribution singly, as they respectively issued from the press.

Thus was a beginning made in that department of beneficence, which afterwards occupied so greatly the labors of the Society, and by means of which its spiritual bounty was conveyed to so many receptacles of ignorance, misery, and vice. In no part of its practical system has the Institution appeared to greater advantage than in that which respects its conduct towards Prisoners of War. In this commerce of pure and gratuitous benevolence, it is to be seen, literally returning good for evil, blessing for cursing, mercy for vengeance; and thus illustrating and adorning, in an eminent and almost unexampled degree, the precept and the spirit of the Gospel. We shall have occasion, hereafter, to see many evidences of the pleasing effects which resulted immediately from the operation of these measures: and we are led to anticipate consequences of still greater moment, when the objects of their kindness, now restored to their country, and re-united to their connections, shall have diffused that knowledge of divine truth, which they acquired in the land of their captivity and exile.

Nor was the care of the Society for Foreigners restricted to those who inhabited their respective countries, or who, by the casualties of war, had been immured in British prisons. A pious solicitude was equally discovered for those, who, born in other regions, speaking other languages,

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and attached to other modes of religious worship, had either permanently established themselves in Great Britain, or were found occasionally resident among us.

In the number of these aliens, the Germans were considered as forming that class which more particularly needed the assistance of the Society, and by which it would be likely to be most thankfully accepted. As soon, therefore, as it was ascertained, that the Society at Nurenberg had completed their edition of the Testament, an inquiry was instituted respecting the state of the Germans in the British metropolis, and other parts of the empire, with respect to their want and desire of the Scriptures in their vernacular tongue: and the information derived from this inquiry, led to an order upon Nurenberg for 1000 German Testaments, to be transmitted to the London Depository.

While these operations, directed to the execution of the Society's object, were thus actively going forward, care was taken to seize every just opportunity of giving such notoriety to its existence and its proceedings, as might acquaint the country with its real merits, and induce a liberal co-operation in its favor. The publication of the First Report was, with that view, made the subject of very extended advertisement; and many respectable channels of communication were employed, to bring it into general cir-

culation. By an order of the Committee, copies of it were transmitted to public libraries, both in town and country; and deposited, with permission, in boarding houses and reading rooms at various watering places, and other stations of fashionable or miscellaneous resort.

The good effect of these, and similar measures, was evinced by the growing attention which the Society excited; and it may be observed in general, that the active dissemination of the Society's Annual Reports, and of such other papers as detailed its plans and proceedings, has been a principal engine of propagating its influence, and of extending both its reputation and its success.

The author is aware, that among the charges advanced against the British and Foreign Bible Society, its frequent, and, as they have been called, ostentatious appeals to the public, have, by some of its opponents, been made the subject of grave and very serious animadversion; and its conduct, in this respect, has been contrasted with that of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; not a little, as it has been concluded, to the advantage of the latter.

One of the Society's opponents speaks with a rather invidious emphasis, of the "unforced extent and dignity" of the Society for Promoting

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Christian Knowledge; and of "the silent and unostentatious manner in which all its proceeding are carried on."*

Another opponent, of considerable rank, professed himself disgusted at the "pomp and parade with which the proceedings and indeed all the meetings of this new Society were set forth in the public papers; and the more so, when he compared it with the simplicity and modesty of the old Society."†

A third, determined to improve upon this favorite idea, carried it to an extreme which stopped little short of absurdity. As there were those, who, at the time the statement was made, gravely represented it as conclusive against the modesty and wisdom of the British and Foreign Bible Society, it may not be amiss to set it down in the writer's own words:

"True charity is never ostentatious; it vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up: satisfied with humbly, and sincerely endeavouring to promote the glory of God, and the welfare of mankind, these two excellent Societies have kept on their way in peace; and have made no noisy appeals to the passions or the feelings of mankind in their own behalf. They have been thankful to Provi-

* Dr. Wordsworth's Letter to Lord Teignmouth, p. 35.

† The late Bishop Randolph's Letter to the Colchester Clergy, as published in the Antijacobin Review.

dence for the benefactors which, from time to time, have been raised up for their support; but have been more solicitous to discharge with propriety the important duties they have undertaken, than *to conciliate the favor of those by whose liberality their funds might possibly be enlarged.*

"*So far*," adds the author, "*has this forbearance been carried, that their very existence is unknown to many, even among the Members of the Established Church. And it is an indisputable fact, that some Clergymen have been induced to connect themselves with the British and Foreign Bible Society, merely because they believe it to be the only Institution which could furnish them with Bibles at a reduced price for distribution among the poor.*"*

Such language might be proper enough, if it were used as an apology for the Societies to which it refers: but it seems difficult to refrain from smiling at the simplicity of a writer who could use it with a view to their *panegyric*. The fact, however, is, that the venerable Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, has exposed the folly of its injudicious advocates, and justified the conduct of the British and Foreign Bible Society, by adopting, in a great measure, the policy so successfully employed by the

* "Enquiry into the Claims of the British and Foreign Bible Society, by the Rev. J. H. Spry." pp. 5, 6.

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latter; and the increase of the members and funds of that venerable Institution, proclaims the benefits which it has reaped by this wise transition from secrecy and quietude, to publicity and exertion. But to return:

About the period when the steps just adverted to were taken, a few individuals, of comparative obscurity, and aspiring to no other distinction than that of exemplary zeal for the diffusion of scriptural truth, formed themselves into a voluntary Association for aiding the British and Foreign Bible Society, by contributing to the increase of its funds.

The first demonstration in favor of the Society, upon a principle of combined and aggregate exertion, had been made at Glasgow in March, 1805, when the Presbytery of that city set the example, so speedily and honorably followed by the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, and afterwards by different Presbyteries, of a collection at all the Parish Churches and Chapels within its bounds. The next was that of these individuals in London, who composed the Association already described. The third place in the order of associated efforts, the order of time at least, is claimed by the town of Birmingham. It must, indeed, be conceded to Wales, that the Congregational Collections made in that country, (the first which took place, on any considerable scale,) partook, in some measure, of the aggregate

quality ascribed to the Associations in Glasgow, London, and Birmingham; there is, however, this difference in the cases, that the collections transmitted from Wales were only contingent and occasional, while the contributions from the respective bodies in Glasgow, London, and Birmingham, were raised upon system, and accompanied with a pledge of continuance and periodical renewal.

As the voluntary Associations in the two last instances contained the rudimental originals of Auxiliary Bible Societies, and were, in fact, the harbingers of those most useful and productive Institutions, I think it due to their character and services to explain more particularly their nature, and the means by which they proposed to benefit the Society, on whose behalf their exertions were made.

The Association in London was formed in July, 1805, and was designated "The Association for the purpose of contributing to the fund of the British and Foreign Bible Society." The laws for its government, with the view of accommodating it to persons of humble circumstances, set the terms of membership designedly low. Every individual, on becoming a member, was required to pay a donation of not more than seven shillings, or less than two; and to contribute monthly not less than sixpence, or more than one shilling. Each member was in his turn,

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to collect from eight members, including himself: the collectors were to be annually changed, in alphabetical order, and those of the preceding year to become the representatives of the Association to the British and Foreign Bible Society for the year ensuing. To the table of regulations from which these particulars have been selected, was prefixed the following address.

"It is admitted by every true member of the church of Christ, that it is his duty to do what lies in his power to promote the spreading of the knowledge of the word of God; and in this day, when, on the one hand, infidelity and licentiousness exhibit themselves with such unexampled effrontery, and on the other, when so many bright examples are set, both by individuals and societies, of arduous exertion in the cause of truth and righteousness, every Christian is peculiarly called upon to shew himself on the Lord's side, and to hold forth the word of life to his perishing fellow sinners. The British and Foreign Bible Society appears to be especially worthy of support from Christians in every class of life: men as competent to the task as perhaps the world can produce, have associated not only to supply such persons in our own country as are destitute of Bibles, but to distribute them in foreign languages throughout the globe, as far as their means shall enable them. And it appears, that, although their

plan and intentions are of the most enlarged nature, yet that the state of the world is such as to call for the concurrent exertions of all descriptions of Christians; and many places call indeed with an affecting voice; for there are numbers of our fellow immortals, in different parts even of Europe, who long for Bibles, who thirst for the water of life, and find no man to give them. Such being the state of the world, and such the object of the Society, they gladly accept of assistance from any persons or societies who are desirous of contributing to the good work. And it having been considered that there are many persons, who, on account of their subscriptions to other societies, or on account of narrowness of their incomes, would not be justified in becoming direct members of the British and Foreign Bible Society, who would yet be desirous of contributing somewhat proportioned to their ability: it is therefore the object of this Association to embrace such persons according to the subsequent plan."

London, August 1, 1805.

The Birmingham Association was formed in April, 1806, chiefly through the active instrumentality of the Rev. Edward Burn, the diligent and highly-respected Minister of St. Mary's in that town. This gentleman addressed a letter to the Committee on the 4th of October, 1805,

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requesting a supply of the Society's Annual Report; "it being the wish of some friends in Birmingham to make an effort to promote a subscription towards the Society among all denominations." One hundred copies of the Report were accordingly transmitted to Mr. Burn for distribution, at his discretion and that of his friends; and the consequence was, a movement in the different circles, which led to the definitive union in April, 1806. It deserves to be recorded, that the different Dissenting Ministers in the town, as well as several members of their respective congregations, contributed their friendly assistance to carry the proposed measure of a general Association into effect; and the chair was occupied, both at the primary meeting, and on most subsequent occasions, by George Simcox, Esq. a gentleman of whose judgment, candor, and philanthropy, it would be difficult to speak in terms exceeding their desert.

The design of this Association was stated in the printed advertisement to be, that a united effort should be made by the different denominations of Christians in Birmingham, in aid of the British and Foreign Bible Society. In order to accomplish this design, it was proposed to divide the town into twelve districts, and to appoint certain gentlemen, whose names were given, to take them severally in charge, for the purpose of soliciting subscriptions. A recom-

mendation was submitted to the ministers of the different churches and chapels, to adopt such measures with their respective congregations, as might best conduce to a general and efficient co-operation. The gentlemen present at the original meeting, together with the clergy and acting magistrates in the town, were appointed a Committee to receive the report, and to transmit the amount to the Treasurer of the British and Foreign Bible Society; and it was further directed, that the sum so transmitted, should be presented as "the united contribution of the different denominations of Christians in the town of Birmingham."

While the Society was thus variously occupied, and receiving such testimonies of approbation and countenance, the elements of hostility were secretly at work, and a storm was collecting, by which the agents who raised it presumptuously hoped to involve the Institution in certain and irremediable destruction. The mode of attack was similar to that which had been adopted on the former occasion;—an attempt to detach from the Society its episcopal patrons: and it ended, as that had done, in utter disappointment and defeat. As the circumstances of this second assault and repulse are very little known, it may not be displeasing to the reader to have them before him.

On the 21st of February, 1806, the author received a letter from the Bishop of London,

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then in residence at St. James's Square, expressing a desire, on the part of his Lordship, to see him "on business of some importance." This letter was speedily followed by a second, containing a request, that the author would bring with him "the last list of the Members of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the last regulations and orders that were introduced; and also mark with a cross those whom he knew, and believed to be Members of the Church of England."

On Tuesday, the 25th, the day appointed for the interview, the author attended at St. James's Square. Upon entering the Bishop's apartment, it was immediately to be perceived, that something unpleasant had happened. His Lordship's countenance was sad, and his thoughts manifestly troubled him. The Bishop soon accosted the author in nearly the following terms: "Mr. Owen, I have sent for you, to tell you, that I have received a pamphlet written against the Bible Society. It is addressed to me; and charges me with misleading my episcopal brethren, and betraying the Established Church. It is much more severe than the Country Clergyman's Letter to Lord Teignmouth, and much better written." The author told the Bishop, that he was prepared to show, as when cited on a former occasion, that the Society had acted in strict conformity to its principles; and further, that he should hold

himself in readiness to undertake its defence, either publicly or privately, as his Lordship might please to direct. "I do not know yet" (said the Bishop) "what it may be best to do. *We*" (meaning, as the author understood his Lordship, *the Bishops)* "are to have a meeting on Friday; and I wish you in the meantime to draw up a memorial on the subject of the Society, and to send it me by that day. I will afterwards let you know, what is further to be done." With these instructions the author promised to comply; and as the publication of the pamphlet in question was delayed, till the copies as presents should have been fully delivered, he prepared the desired memorial with all practicable expedition, and transmitted it with the necessary documents, by the day which his Lordship had appointed.

The memorial contained a select enumeration of facts, adapted to explain the nature of the Society's general proceedings, and to evince the correctness with which it had adhered to its fundamental regulations, in all its transactions both abroad and at home. As the conclusion of the memorial expressed the sentiments by which the conduct of the author was governed in this moment of conflict and trial, he hopes to be excused for inserting it in this place.

"Upon the whole, my Lord, I trust it will appear, not only to your Lordship, but also to

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every reasonable man, that our case is a good one. For my own part, I shall be ready to answer any objections which may be brought against the Society with decency and temper, in such manner as may be prescribed. To anonymous attacks I am afraid we must be exposed. The facility of wounding a generous mind by insinuations too readily believed, is a temptation which those can scarcely resist who are employing all the resources of an implacable spirit to blow up into a flame the embers of dissension. I joined the Bible Society with no other view than that of promoting the interests of the Church of England, and of our common faith; and believe, in my conscience, after nearly two years close and official experience, that the Society has promoted, and is yet likely to promote, in a substantial manner, both those ends. This consideration reconciles me to the sacrifice of much time and labor and anxiety to the duties of an office which was forced upon me; and which I have discharged, and while I remain in it, will continue to discharge without fee or reward. I shall be happy to receive your Lordship's commands upon this and any other subject; as, next to the satisfaction of my own conscience, is the desire I have of approving myself,

"My Lord,

"Your very faithful Servant, &c."

It now only remains to describe the event of this private and confidential investigation. After a considerable silence on the part of the Bishop, which it did not become the author to interrupt, his Lordship at length reported, that the writer of the pamphlet had proved to be the same individual, who, in the Spring of 1805, had appeared under the character of the Country Clergyman; and that he had consented (in the language of the Bishop) "to make the *amende honorable*," by withdrawing the whole impression of his pamphlet.

Thus quietly and efficaciously was this storm dispersed: an angry controversy was thereby happily prevented; and the Society, delivered once again from the hand of its enemies, was suffered to proceed, without further interruption, to the triumphant celebration of its second Anniversary.

On this occasion, as on the preceding, a spirit of Christian harmony pervaded the numerous assembly, and an interesting solemnity characterized throughout the transactions of the day.

The members of the Society, though discriminated by various modes of religious sentiment and discipline, felt, that, in this cause at least, they were brethren: they listened to the tidings in which they had a common concern, with eager attention; and each appeared desirous to rival the other in testifying his joy at the success of

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that Institution which had so auspiciously united them all.

Amidst the calamities of an expensive war, which necessarily imposed extraordinary burdens, they saw their treasury replenished with liberal offerings; and while commerce was crippled, and trade discouraged, and little was to be heard through the vehicles of secular intelligence but rumours of successful ambition, and forebodings of still more extended devastation and thraldom, they were regaled with the delightful information of new channels opened for communicating the glad tidings of the Gospel of Peace, and of fresh accessions of strength to their confederated exertions for promoting the instruction and the happiness of mankind.

It would naturally occur to the Members of the Society, assembled under circumstances of so great political distress, to contrast the condition of foreign nations with that of their own; and to derive from the reflection an increased conviction of their obligation to improve those privileges, so peculiarly, and so wonderfully maintained. This consideration, among others of a similar tendency, was very pertinently adverted to by the President in the close of his Report; and the passage is at once so beautiful and appropriate, that it shall be adopted as the conclusion of this chapter.

" But when we reflect upon the alarming and afflictive dispensations of Providence which have visited foreign nations, while we have been blessed with an exemption from them, gratitude to the great Disposer of events, in every possible way, is more than a common duty; and, in endeavouring to promote his honor by the diffusion of the Holy Scriptures, we discharge but a small part of those solemn obligations which his singular favor so peculiarly imposes upon us. What effects may flow from the most successful labors of the Society, is not within the limits of human foresight: Paul may plant, Apollos may water, but it is God alone who giveth the increase. But we may be allowed to entertain a reasonable expectation, that the seed of the word will not be sown in vain; and that among the numbers to whom it will be conveyed by the British and Foreign Bible Society, many will receive it with joy, and cultivate it with profit; and that the beneficial effects of the Institution will extend to generations yet unborn."

CHAPTER IV.

1806—7.

In entering upon the duties of its third year, the British and Foreign Bible Society found itself possessed of respectable strength; and felt that it had made, all circumstances considered, no contemptible progress in the acquisition of pecuniary resources and public estimation.

The state of its funds did not indeed report that striking augmentation which some of its sanguine friends might have been led to expect: but an increase of nearly 300*l.* in the annual subscriptions, and of more than 1,000*l.* in the contributions from Wales, together with an entirely new article of revenue from Scotland, amounting to nearly 4,000*l.* was an indication of improvement, which authorized a confident hope, that the Society would, eventually, obtain an income commensurate with its projected and probable expenditure.

The testimonies of approbation which it had been accustomed to receive, augmented in a higher proportion; and afforded much greater and more animating encouragement.

Wales, though unavoidably disappointed in its expectation of receiving the promised Welsh Bibles, continued to cherish, principally, as heretofore, among the humbler classes of its population, a zealous regard for the object of the Institution, and to manifest a persevering disposition to aid its resources, by efforts of extraordinary liberality.

Unequivocal evidences were furnished in England of a similar attachment to the cause of the Society, and of a desire to co-operate effectually in its support. A large addition of names to the list of annual subscribers; the zeal of the humble Association in London; and particularly that of the more powerful combination in Birmingham, gave indisputable proofs of a strong sensation excited in favor of the Society's views among the inhabitants of South Britain; and justified the warmest anticipation of an extending and permanent impression.

The interest which Scotland evinced in the success of the Society's undertaking, was too clearly developed, not to awaken the most lively emotions of satisfaction and of hope, in contemplating the accession of so zealous and powerful an ally. Collections transmitted from six Presbyteries, announced a degree of approbation, on the part of the Scottish National Church, to which great importance was deservedly attached. The conductors of the Institution were encouraged

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by this, and other circumstances of a similar description, to hope, that the character of their Society would, in due course of time, be justly appreciated by those ecclesiastical authorities throughout the United Kingdom, from whose general and decided countenance there was good reason to believe, that both the Church and the Society would derive an equal advantage.

To these symptoms of progress must be added the event which had recently taken place in Ireland, in the establishment of a kindred Society at Dublin, and other general indications of a growing solicitude for aiding and encouraging the Parent Institution. Such were the circumstances under which the operations of the third year commenced; and we are now to trace the course of them through their several channels both foreign and domestic.

The German Bible Society at Nurenberg had, from nearly the earliest period of its institution, maintained an amicable and active communication with the numerous friends of religion, who resided in Bâsle and its vicinity. The insufficiency of the means possessed by the latter, to form and sustain an independent establishment, reconciled them to the alternative, of connecting themselves for the present with the Society at Nurenberg, and employing it as a temporary instrument for the accomplishment of their own designs.

It soon, however, appeared, that a change of position from Nurenberg to Bâsle would materially promote the interests and the efficiency of the general system. Bâsle had many local and circumstantial advantages, which qualified it, in an eminent degree, for becoming the seat of a Bible Society. Forming, as it did, the centre of the German "Religious Society," an establishment of great celebrity and usefulness, and commanding a very extensive range of connections with persons of distinguished piety both in Switzerland and Germany, it possessed facilities of communication and of distribution, which, in reference to a plan for the general dispersion of the Scriptures, would, it was perceived, be found of essential importance. Add to these considerations, that its reputation for typography and paper, stood deservedly high; and that it enjoyed, on that ground, peculiar advantages for the execution of Biblical works.

Impressed by a candid representation of these circumstances, the Committee at Nurenberg most readily acquiesced in the proposition made to them, for removing the German Bible Society from their own direction to that of their brethren at Bâsle. The latter, on their part, announced the transfer, as having been made with mutual consent; and in an earnest and animated appeal to the German public, solicited aid to enable them to bring to maturity the main object of their

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Institution, that of furnishing, as speedily as possible, a cheap impression of the whole Bible.

It will throw some light on the difficulties with which Bible Societies had to struggle in the early part of their career, and illustrate at the same time the pious zeal and determined energy of their advocates and promoters, to extract a portion of that address with which the conductors of the Bâsle Bible Society (the designation which the German Bible Society is henceforth to bear) entered upon the discharge of their public engagements.

"Our prospects" (they say) "with regard to the ultimate success of this Institution, so pregnant with blessings, become still more gloomy when we direct our sorrowing view to the almost universal desolation produced by the present war, to the almost total stagnation of commerce and manufactories, to the daily increasing impoverishment of many thousands, to the parsimony which the more opulent are obliged to observe in their expenditure, and to the progressive indigence, and consequent want of spirit, among our poor countrymen. And yet, on the other hand, all these melancholy circumstances are but the stronger appeals to our hearts, to hasten to the relief of our desponding countrymen with the reviving consolations of God's word; to carry into the huts of the indigent the glad tidings of the Gospel of salvation; and with this

balm from heaven to dispel the tears of sorrow from the eyes of the afflicted. What! shall they whose earthly possessions have been swept away by the ravages of the times, remain destitute also of the heavenly manna? Shall they whose earthly joys are gone to the grave, be debarred the superior joys of religion, because they have not money sufficient to purchase a Bible for themselves and their families?" "Into your sympathizing bosoms, worthy promoters of Christianity, we pour the concerns of ours; and leave to your Christian generosity, to your active philanthropy, the important decision of the question, whether our Institution shall attain its great object or not." "Highly commendable is it to lay the first foundations of Christian Institutions; but it is still more commendable and productive of blessing, to raise an Institution already established, to its full scope of utility, and to give to its fair energies an extensive sphere of beneficial operation."

Such were the sentiments and the spirit in which the German Bible Society was ushered into notice, upon its transplantation from Nurenberg to Bâsle. The reader will anticipate the best effects from the influence of such a commencement; and he may be assured, that in that anticipation he will not be eventually disappointed.

The Bible Society at Berlin, placed, by the occupation of that capital on the part of the

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French, in circumstances of almost unparalleled embarrassment, continued to maintain its exertions, with unabated activity, amidst those political disasters which overwhelmed both the Prince and the People. The printing of the Bohemian Bible, which had commenced antecedently to the breaking out of hostilities between Prussia and France, proceeded, with little interruption, during the entire continuance of that awful visitation which might have been expected to drain the resources of public liberality, and paralyze every movement that was directed to the welfare of mankind. In fact, a demonstration was given by this triumph over what might have appeared insurmountable obstacles, that, though Kings may be bound in chains, and Nobles in fetters of iron, yet the word of God cannot be bound, or its progress effectually retarded.

As early as November, 1805, the design of printing an edition of the Bohemian Bible was publicly announced from Berlin. Still further steps were taken for giving it notoriety, when, in February, 1806, His Prussian Majesty had extended his royal patronage to the Society, and authorized the employment of a higher tone, and measures of greater confidence and decision.

These reiterated appeals were not without their effect. In the ensuing month of June, the number of copies subscribed for, amounted to 1,100. Dantzig had, in the mean time, been

induced to form a connection with Berlin, and to make exertions for yielding a tribute to the promotion of that work in which the latter was so honorably engaged. This communication was chiefly brought about through the active instrumentality of the Rev. Mr. Ewald, Rector of the Holy Trinity, in Dantzig, who, in a newspaper, in which he had inserted the address from the Berlin Bible Society to the King of Prussia, and his Majesty's reply, voluntarily tendered his services to receive and transmit subscriptions in favor of that Institution.

Such was the progress which this small, but diligent and simple-minded body had made in exciting public attention, and obtaining subscriptions, when, encouraged by a second pecuniary grant from the British and Foreign Bible Society, they resolved to delay no longer the execution of their primary design, but to put to press immediately an edition of the Bohemian Bible, amounting to 3,000 copies. The resolution to that effect was dated the 12th of August; and, on the 16th of the ensuing October, the French army, under Napoleon Bonaparte, got possession of Berlin.

It was matter of relief and consolation to find, that, as the dearth of the Scriptures was so great in Bohemia, and the accomplishment of the intended impression would be unavoidably retarded by the circumstances of distress and exaction to which the Prussian dominions were reduced, a

temporary supply of 3,000 New Testaments, together with the Book of Psalms, had been furnished to the Bohemian congregations from the Bible Institution at Halle. For this seasonable and munificent donation, the Society at Berlin, and the Protestants in Bohemia, were indebted to the spontaneous generosity of a Prussian officer; who, understanding that copies were to be procured from that repository, with a liberality most worthy of memorial and of imitation, paid the entire price of the 3,000 copies, amounting to 600 rix dollars, and added 100 more to defray the expenses of conveyance to the places of their destination.

It is a pleasing duty to record such acts of pious munificence in persons sustaining the profession of arms. They afford a convincing testimony, that the grace of God is not restrained in its operations by the narrow rules of human judgment. Assuming that they proceed from a Christian principle, we cannot but regard them as so many proofs, that the power of religion may be felt and exemplified under every diversity of condition or employment; and that circumstances of peculiar temptation may be over-ruled in such a manner by the influence of divine grace, as to exhibit the most advantageous displays of charity and virtue.

The proceedings of the British and Foreign Bible Society were also characterized by certain

communications of an interesting nature from other parts of the European continent, to which, as they fix the era of its entrance on stations, since become conspicuous for activity and influence, it will be proper to pay some attention.

Among the places of consideration to which, shortly after its establishment, the Society had been made known, through the exertions of its Foreign Secretary, and certain zealous correspondents abroad, was Königsberg, the capital of Prussia. The impression made by the intelligence of the formation of the Society, and the inquiries with which that intelligence was accompanied, was such as to induce the Rev. Mr. Glogau, and the Rev. Dr. Wald, the latter of whom was a Counsellor of the Consistory, to transmit, through the Rev. Dr. Knapp, information which determined the Society to consider that quarter as claiming its special regard.

The substance of this information, together with some particulars afterwards received, purported, that the province of Lithuania contained a population exceeding a million of souls; the smaller proportion of which was subject to the Prussian, the larger to the Russian government: that it possessed 74 churches, and 460 schools: that the people were in general religiously disposed, but exceedingly destitute of the Scriptures: and that they were prepared to esteem a Bible gratuitously bestowed, as "an

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extremely valuable acquisition." To this account of Lithuania, Mr. Glogau added the opinion entertained by himself and his friends, on the object of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the desirableness of extending its operations to that province. As the language employed by Mr. Glogau, confirms what has been said of the impression made on the people of Königsberg, and justifies the solicitude which was felt on their behalf, it may be proper to extract it.

"The plan of the Society of Religious Philanthropists in London, to have Bibles printed in all the European languages, and partly to distribute them gratis, partly to have them sold at very low prices to indigent Christians of all nations, which you have had the goodness to communicate to me, is of so generous and laudable a nature, that they will undoubtedly receive the warmest thanks for it, both from their contemporaries and from posterity. This excellent Society would acquire a very peculiar claim to applause, by realizing this benevolent idea, with regard to the province of Lithuania, where it is greatly to be apprehended that the Bible, particularly the Old Testament, must, in the course of time, fall altogether into oblivion among the still very uncultivated inhabitants."

The war which shortly after broke out, prevented, for a considerable time, the adoption of measures for relieving the spiritual wants of Lithua-

nia; and by its destructive ravages in that most afflicted province, rendered its inhabitants still less competent to any effectual exertions among themselves. But the object, thus brought into view by this early communication, was kept steadily in sight, both by the people of Königsberg, and the British and Foreign Bible Society, through all the vicissitudes of temporal distress, till that order of things was established, which afforded encouragement to prosecute it with a reasonable prospect of success.

Another transaction arising out of the foreign communications of this year, was that which introduced the operations of the Society into the dominions of His Danish Majesty. As this occurrence will be found, in the event, to have opened a way to that connection with the North of Europe, from which consequences of so great importance have since been derived, it will be proper to describe, with some degree of explicitness, the peculiar manner in which it originated.

On the 4th of August, 1806, the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society took into their consideration the case and circumstances of the inhabitants of Iceland, and the propriety of furnishing a supply of the Holy Scriptures in their native language, to that interesting, and, as it appeared, necessitous people. By what train of circumstances the attention of

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the Committee was drawn to this subject, the following statement will explain.

In the year 1805, the Rev. John Paterson, and the Rev. Ebenezer Henderson, both natives of Scotland, and animated with a zeal for the propagation of the Gospel, resigned their country, connections, and worldly prospects, in order to serve as Christian Missionaries in India. Precluded by the regulations of the British East-India Company from occupying stations within their territorial dominions, they repaired to Copenhagen, in the hope of obtaining a passage to Tranquebar, and exercising their ministry within the settlement attached to the Danish Crown, on the coast of Coromandel. Having been disappointed in their expectation, they felt themselves compelled to abandon the design; a design nearest their heart, of proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation to the heathen: and began to consider, in what manner they might turn their missionary zeal to profitable account in that part of Christendom, upon which the Providence of God appeared to have cast them.

Under this impression, they commenced a very diligent inquiry into the state of religion in the countries by which they were more immediately surrounded. Among the individuals of consideration, with whom they had formed a connection during their residence at Copenhagen, was, Justiciary Thorkelin, Privy-Keeper of the Royal

Archives, a person very generally respected, and distinguished for his zealous attachment to the cause of Christianity. This gentleman, being a native of Iceland, and feeling, as a Christian patriot, for the spiritual welfare of his country, laid open to these disappointed missionaries a field of immediate usefulness, by directing their attention to the religious state of the inhabitants of that island, and to the dearth of the Holy Scriptures, at that time prevailing among them. Mr. Thorkelin stated, that the population, amounting to nearly 50,000, scarcely contained one person in a hundred above the age of twelve or fourteen, who could not read; that no people in the world were fonder of reading; and that as the only press of which they were possessed had not been used for many years, the inhabitants supplied the want of printed books by the laborious and tardy expedient of transcribing them: that the Scriptures were no longer to be obtained for money; and that not above forty or fifty copies of the Bible were to be found throughout the island. These affecting particulars excited in the breasts of these excellent young men, the kindest emotions. Touched with compassion for nearly 50,000 of their fellow-Christians, inhabiting a remote island, and destitute of those sacred oracles which they so dearly prized and revered, Messrs. Paterson and Henderson dis-

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patched the information with which themselves had been so deeply impressed, to their friends in Scotland; and made an earnest appeal on behalf of this interesting and destitute people. Through this circuitous channel the intelligence was conveyed by a respectable correspondent in Edinburgh, to the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and thus the question of administering aid to the necessitous Icelanders, was brought regularly and seriously before them.

It was immediately determined, that the President should be requested to open a communication with the Bishop of Iceland, and offer, in the name of the Society, to defray half the expense of an edition of 5,000 Icelandic Testaments. With this request his Lordship complied; and as a letter on such a subject from a British Nobleman to an Icelandic Prelate, may be not improperly esteemed a religious curiosity, the author will gratify the reader by transcribing it for his satisfaction.

To the Right Rev. the Bishop of Iceland.

" Right Rev. Sir, *London, Sept.* 23, 1806.

" I have the honor to address you, and, through you, the Clergy of Iceland, on the part of a

Society established in London, under the denomination of 'The British and Foreign Bible Society;' of which I am the President. This Institution has been established more than two years; it was originally proposed by a few individuals, (who take an interest in the eternal welfare of their fellow-creatures,) and is now supported by numerous Christians of all classes and denominations. The object of it is pure and simple, being solely and expressly to encourage and promote a wider circulation of the Holy Scriptures; and it embraces in its operation not only the empire of Great Britain, but all countries and nations, whether Christian, Pagan, or Mahomedan, as far as the means and opportunities of the Society admit. The British and Foreign Bible Society has had the satisfaction to learn, that the object of its establishment has been most cordially approved in Germany, Switzerland, and other parts of Europe; that its example has become an object of zealous imitation, and that, by the blessing of God, it has proved, either directly or indirectly, the instrument of circulating the Holy Scriptures, to a very great extent, upon the Continent. I am persuaded, Right Reverend Sir, that this information will not be uninteresting to you, and to the Clergy of Iceland.

"Our Society has been informed, that copies of

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the Holy Scriptures, in the Icelandic dialect, are very scarce, and difficult to be procured; and that, on this account, many of our Christian Brethren, in your country, are in want of them. Presuming this information to be correct, the British and Foreign Bible Society would have felt much gratification in having had the power immediately to supply their wants; but Icelandic Bibles can be neither printed nor procured in England. The Society therefore adopts the only means it possesses of giving effect to the object of its Institution, by an offer to contribute a moiety of the expense of printing an octavo edition of 5,000 copies of the New Testament, in the Icelandic dialect, and authorizes me to communicate this resolution to you, Right Reverend Sir, and the Clergy of Iceland. The Society will have great pleasure in learning from you, that the offer is accepted; and, upon receiving information to that effect, and of the amount required for the purpose expressed, will immediately direct a remittance of it to Copenhagen.

"I hope to be honored with an answer to this letter, as soon as an opportunity offers; and the British and Foreign Bible Society, as well as myself, will be happy to receive from you any information on subjects connected with the object of its Institution, which it is equally their duty

and wish to promote in the greatest possible extent.

" I have the honor to be,
" Right Reverend Sir,
" Your most obedient, and
" Most humble Servant,
" TEIGNMOUTH."

Shortly after the date of their dispatch to Scotland, and considerably before any accounts could have arrived of what was determined upon in London, Messrs. Paterson and Henderson were led to visit a small religious Society in the island of Fühnen; and in the course of communication with the Directors of it, upon a topic of mutual interest, the advancement of the Redeemer's Kingdom, they learnt, that this Society had also turned its attention to the state of religion in Iceland, and had elicited, by a correspondence with the Bishop, very important information, relative to the want and desire of the Holy Scriptures, as existing among the inhabitants of that island.

It appeared from the intelligence of which this Society had thus become possessed, that the common people in Iceland were not behind those of the same description in Denmark, in regard to religious information, owing chiefly to their great

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desire for reading, and knowledge in general, and the excellent religious exercises held in many houses from Michaelmas to Easter; that, among other devotional books, the Bible, and particularly the New Testament, was customarily read in every family which was able to obtain it; and that a copy was not then to be had for money, and when it happened that one appeared at an auction, it sold at an enormous price. "Never," (writes the Bishop of Iceland to the correspondent who had addressed him,) "never will Iceland forget her dear Stistrup, who, at his own expense, bought and sent to this place a great number of Bibles and New Testaments, to be given away gratis. This has now ceased, however, for the space of sixty years and upwards, and most of these Bibles are now worn out. I remember frequently to have heard the best farmers in the parish, warmly contending which of them should have the loan of the Bible which was sent to their parish for themselves and their children. The older editions of the Scriptures are not to be had at all. The printing press in the island is no longer in order: we therefore cannot do any thing to supply this want; and the common people in Iceland will, within ten years, be entirely deprived of this blessed book, which is so dear and precious to them.

"You will see from this, my dear Sir, how infinitely obliged and thankful I and my country-

men shall be to the dear brethren who, of their benevolence, offer to favor us with the New Testament in the Icelandic. The number of copies I will not take upon me to determine. Your letter, however, gives me occasion to mention, that there are 305 parishes, and about 47,000 inhabitants."

In consequence of information so calculated to inspire both compassion and encouragement, the Fühnen Society had determined, antecedently to the interview with Messrs. Paterson and Henderson, to print an edition of the Icelandic Testament to the amount of 2,000 copies.

As the subject had occupied the attention of the latter while residing at Copenhagen, and the statements made by the Fühnen Society were corroborated in all material points by the different articles of intelligence which they had previously received, they felt a strong disposition to see the proposed relief of these interesting islanders placed upon a scale commensurate with their necessities. With this view, they turned their eyes to the British and Foreign Bible Society, (of which, at that time, they knew little more than the name;) and, considering this to be a case in which its funds might be very opportunely and advantageously employed, and being profoundly ignorant of the steps which it had already taken, they transmitted, for its information, the particulars which have just been detailed. The

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Committee were prepared by what had before taken place, to sympathize with their new correspondents, in a desire to afford effectual assistance to Iceland. Struck with the undesigned coincidence of the determination on the part of the Fühnen Society, with their own vote by way of inducement, they resolved on the 6th of October, the day on which the proposition from Fühnen was brought before them, to co-operate with that Society in this most seasonable measure; and, by an amendment of their former grant, to authorize the enlargement of the projected impression of the Icelandic Testament, from 2,000 to 5,000 copies.

Such were the circumstances to which we are to ascribe the introduction of the Rev. Messrs. Paterson and Henderson to the notice and the employment of the British and Foreign Bible Society; and the origin of those exertions which, promoted by the wisdom and activity of these diligent laborers, and fostered by the paternal care of a benign and gracious Providence, have terminated in measures so dignified and comprehensive, on the part of the Northern Powers of Europe, for circulating the Holy Scriptures among the inhabitants of their respective dominions.

Some advances were also made this year towards a communication with Russia; and indications were given, which, though faint and

indistinct, were eagerly cherished, that light was beginning to dawn on the skirts of that vast empire. The points to which this statement refers, were situated respectively in the vicinities of the Baltic and the Caspian seas; and as it may be satisfactory to the reader to know, the author will briefly relate what was done, or rather attempted, with a view to improve these favorable openings, and to bring the British and Foreign Bible Society into contact with the only accessible parts of the Russian population.

In the month of March, 1806, an application was received from a respectable Superintendant of the Lutheran church in Esthonia, on the Baltic, in behalf of "fifty parishes, containing at least 15,000 families." This Ecclesiastic petitioned, with considerable earnestness, that the Society would "remember them, and assist them with a pecuniary aid; in order that the whole Bible, or at least a part of it, might be gratuitously or cheaply distributed to the many indigent persons, who" (he added) "are at present destitute of this treasure." To this application attention was immediately paid; and a grant to a respectable amount was tendered, on condition of a Bible Society being formed for the province of Esthonia. Thus incidentally was an overture made for an establishment, which, though not effected till several years afterwards, may trace its commencement to the promptitude and kind-

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ness with which the Society acted on this occasion. The sequel will show, how much the Society reaped from the favorable reception given to the prayer of this patriotic Minister, that the Institution would "communicate blessings to thousands of his countrymen, by affording them the means of access to the best of all knowledge, and by inspiring their minds with the purest motives of all genuine virtue and solid consolation."

A second point within the territories of Russia, from which a line of communication was drawn to the British and Foreign Bible Society, was Karass, a missionary settlement, to the north of the Caspian sea.* Here, under the patronage of the Edinburgh Missionary Society, the late Rev. Henry Brunton, and his associates, one of whom, the Rev. Robert Pinkerton, will hereafter make so conspicuous a figure in the pages of this History, were laboring against many impediments,

* The Missionaries who first embarked in this service were, the Rev. Henry Brunton, and Alexander Paterson. They were dispatched in April, 1802; and being reinforced in the ensuing summer to the number of fifteen persons, they formed the settlement at Karass, a village situated near the source of the river Cubane. After many vicissitudes of danger and suffering, the settlers removed in 1814, for safety and convenience, to Georgievesk, the capital of the Caucasian government; thirty-two wersts eastward of their former situation, and 400 northward of Tiflis. See an interesting account of this mission in Dr. Brown's History of the Propagation of Christianity, vol. ii. p. 583. Also Klaproth's Travels into Caucasus, &c.

both from the unhealthiness of the climate, and the prejudices of the natives, to propagate the knowledge and influence of Christianity among a Mahommedan and Heathen population, extending from the banks of the Wolga to the shores of the Euxine.

On this mission, His Imperial Majesty, influenced by the favorable representation of the Secretary of State, Count Novassilsoff, was graciously pleased to confer extraordinary privileges: many services were also rendered to it by other individuals of high rank, and exemplary piety, and who possessed considerable weight in the political councils of St. Petersburg.*

In consequence of the distribution of certain religious tracts in the Tartar dialect of the Turkish language, and the conversation and discourses of the missionaries and their converts, many, not only of the people, but also of the Molas and Effendis, expressed a desire to have the Bible in a language which they understood. Intelligence to this effect was conveyed to the British and Foreign Bible Society from Karass, through the Secretary of the Edinburgh Missionary Society; and there was added to it the

* Among these should be mentioned with particular commendation and gratitude, His Excellency Count Kotschoubey, Minister of the Interior, to whose active and persevering attentions the mission has throughout been under the greatest obligations.

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assurance, that Mr. Brunton had made himself master of the Turkish and Tartar dialects; that reading was much cultivated through the activity of the Mahommedan Priests; that no version of the Old Testament had hitherto been printed in either of those dialects; and that Seaman's version of the New Testament, printed at Oxford in 1666, was little calculated for the purpose of general circulation. On this last ground, principally, Mr. Brunton and his associates had been induced to undertake a new version; and the object of transmitting these details to the British and Foreign Bible Society, was to obtain encouragement and aid towards the performance of so desirable an undertaking. This object was promptly and effectually obtained: the Committee, regarding the proposed work as pregnant with great and extensive advantages, determined to supply the Translators with a new fount of Arabic types, and a sufficient quantity of paper and ink to enable them to execute an impression of 5,000 copies. The course and completion of this work will furnish hereafter much interesting matter of narration; but it is here introduced to the notice of the reader, for the purpose of marking the era in which a connection was formed between the British and Foreign Bible Society and this Asiatic Dependency of the Russian Imperial Crown.

A third step in this progress towards a con-

nection with the Russian Empire, was of a more decisive character. The circumstance which led to it, arose out of a correspondence with some intelligent individuals at Sarepta, near Astrachan. In the communications from that quarter, elicited by queries of a similar import to those which had been generally circulated, it was confidently stated, that the Scriptures were so extremely scarce in Russia, that, to use a strong expression employed by the writer, "it was generally known a hundred wersts off, when the treasure of a Bible was to be met with." To this account it was added, that, in the German colonies established on the Wolga since 1766, and which contained thirteen Protestant parishes, the circumstances of the pastors were too low to enable them to purchase a stock of Bibles for the purpose of selling them to the poor at reduced prices, and still less of giving them away."

For the want described in this last statement a remedy was suggested, of which the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society were not backward to avail themselves. The Bible Institution at Halle was provided with a stock, from which a supply might immediately be derived. An order was therefore given upon that depository, for 400 German Bibles, and 200 Testaments; and the Rev. Dr. Knapp undertook to have them forwarded to the settlement with all practicable dispatch.

It appeared, however, from the whole of the intelligence above referred to, confirmed as it was by information from other respectable sources, that the population of Russia, both native and foreign, was in such a condition, with respect to the want of the Holy Scriptures, and the deficiency of practical resources for supplying it, as to render the stimulating exertions of the Bible Society throughout that vast Empire peculiarly desirable. The duty of proceeding in such a manner as to evince a proper regard to the constituted authorities of the Empire, was felt on this, as on every similar occasion; and it was therefore resolved to address the Metropolitan of the Greek Church, Archbishop Plato; and to endeavour to interest that eminent and learned Prelate in measures for promoting the circulation of the Scriptures in Russia. The events which have since occurred in the establishment of the Russian Bible Society at St. Petersburg, and of an affiliated Institution in Moscow, the residence of the Metropolitan himself, give to the President's letter a peculiar interest, and will therefore suggest a sufficient reason for its insertion.

To the Most Rev. the Archbishop and Metropolitan Plato, &c.

" Most Rev. Sir,

" The importance of the subject of this Letter will, I trust, apologize for an address from a person who has not the honor to be known to you.

" Permit me, in the first place, to inform you, Most Reverend Sir, that I am President of a Society which has been established in London more than two years, under the denomination of ' The British and Foreign Bible Society.' This Institution (which was first proposed by a few individuals, who take an interest in the eternal welfare of their fellow-creatures,) is now supported by numerous Christians, of all classes and denominations; the object of it is pure and simple, being solely and expressly to encourage and promote a wider circulation of the Holy Scriptures; and it embraces in its operation not only the Empire of Great Britain, but all countries and nations, whether Christian, Pagan, or Mahommedan, as far as the means and opportunities of the Society admit.

" The British and Foreign Bible Society has had the satisfaction to find that the object of its establishment has been most cordially approved in Germany, Switzerland, and other parts of

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Europe; that its example has become an object of zealous imitation; and that, by the blessing of God, it has proved, either directly or indirectly, the instrument of circulating the Holy Scriptures to a very great extent upon the Continent.

" I am persuaded, Most Reverend Sir, that this information will not be uninteresting to you, who are so well qualified to feel the importance and appreciate the utility of the Institution which I have described.

" It is equally the duty and desire of the Members of the British and Foreign Bible Society to extend the benefits of their Institution as far as possible; and, under the influence of these motives, they have entered into correspondence with religious and well-disposed persons, in various parts of Europe, for the purpose of soliciting their assistance and influence in promoting the object of the Society, and information as to the most practicable means of doing it.

" In many instances, the information obtained by those means, has led to the most pleasing consequences; it has afforded to the Society the gratification of aiding with their funds (which are derived from voluntary contributions) the printing of versions of the Holy Scriptures in foreign languages, and of conveying this invaluable treasure to numbers who were destitute of it, and wanted the means of obtaining it.

" The same motives have induced me, Most Reverend Sir, to trouble you with this address, under an assurance, that the British and Foreign Bible Society will consider itself highly gratified by any notice which you may think proper to take of it.

" Information has been communicated to us, that copies of the Russian Bible are scarce, and difficult to be procured; and that many of our Christian brethren of the Greek Church, on this account, are in want of them: of the accuracy of this information you are best qualified to judge, as well as whether the assistance of the British and Foreign Bible Society towards printing a cheap edition of the Russian Bible, for the purpose of supplying any existing wants, would be acceptable. It is on these points that I venture to solicit your opinion, in the confidence that it will be granted; and that, if the object of the Society should meet your approbation, your influence and co-operation in promoting its disinterested views, will not be withheld.

" I have the honor to be,
" Most Reverend Sir,
" With great respect,
" Your most Obedient,
" Humble Servant,
" TEIGNMOUTH."

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What effect this letter produced on the mind of Archbishop Plato has not been correctly ascertained, inasmuch as no direct reply was received from him. There is, however, reason to believe, by intelligence, conveyed through circuitous channels, that the Metropolitan did not overlook an object, which, to an enlightened* mind like his, could not have been indifferent. Certain it is, that this overture on the part of the President of the British and Foreign Bible Society, excited a lively interest in its eventual success among the German Settlers at Sarepta, whose sentiments may be considered as expressed by Mr. Hiemer, one of their Ministers, when thus feelingly expressing his own:

"May the Lord give his blessing to the design

* With what justice this epithet is applied to the late Archbishop Plato, may be learned from a perusal of that Prelate's "Summary of Christian Doctrine," as it appears in the Rev. Mr. Pinkerton's very seasonable and intelligent work, entitled, "The Present State of the Greek Church." The writer of these pages cannot refer to that publication without concurring with its excellent author, in expressing a hope, that, "by affording a more accurate idea of the doctrines and present state of the Russian church than has hitherto been given, it will have the effect of exciting in the British nation a lively feeling of Christian regard for the inhabitants of that extensive empire, and will suggest additional motives to unwearied exertion, and fervent prayer, in behalf of its numerous tribes, that the fundamental object of the St. Petersburg Bible Society may soon be obtained, and 'each tribe put in possession of the word of God, in its own language.'"

of the honored Society, by the extended diffusion of the Scriptures given by inspiration of God, to oppose a barrier to the overwhelming torrent of infidelity, and to procure for poor benighted souls access to the life-giving knowledge of Jesus Christ! This is the sincere wish of my heart, and I therefore take also the warmest interest in the negociation which the Noble President of the Society has opened with the Archbishop Plato."

While the Society, intent upon extending and perpetuating the means of dispersing the Holy Scriptures, was thus preparing the ground on which the foundations were in due time to be laid of establishments, similar to its own, for the northern sovereignties of Europe, it was not less actively employed in disseminating copies for temporary and immediate uses in other parts of the world, where circumstances forbad, for the present at least, the expectation of more general and permanent operations. Among the number of those who participated in the benefit of these exertions, were, the French at St. Domingo, the Spaniards at Buenos Ayres, and the British Settlers, Soldiers, and Colonists, in North America, the Cape of Good Hope, New South Wales, and Van Diemen's Land. It may elucidate what has been generally said of the activity and vigilance of the Committee, to observe, that

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their attention to the Spaniards of Buenos Ayres, was excited by the intelligence of that place having come into the possession of the British arms; and that the investment of Spanish Testaments for the benefit of its inhabitants, was sent out with the earliest cargoes which were shipped in the Port of London upon commercial speculation. With what effect this act of British philanthropy was attended, will be hereafter seen.

The impression made by the donation of Bibles and Testaments on the Governor of Van Diemen's Land, was honorably testified by an acknowledgment on his part, which did not reach England till after the writer's decease. In this letter, which it may not be amiss to anticipate, the reader will find a pleasing testimony, both of the solicitude of Governor Collins for the religious improvement of the Colony, and of the tendency which the Society's communication had to encourage that feeling, and to afford it an opportunity of immediate and useful employment.

Government House, Hobart Town,

" Sir, *Sept.* 10, 1809.

" I take the earliest opportunity in my power, to acknowledge the receipt, on the 28th ult. of your letter of the 4th of June, 1807, communicating to me the benevolent design of the British

and Foreign Bible Society in favor of the Settlement under my command, by furnishing it with the means of obtaining a knowledge of the sacred writings.

" Although we were not destitute of those means, having a regular clerical establishment in the place, yet it gave me sincere pleasure to find we were noticed by your Society; and I lost no time in placing the distribution of the Bibles and Testaments in the hands of our clergymen.

" Our Settlement is rather large and increasing, being composed of upwards of 1,000 souls, many of whom are extremely young, and upon whose minds, you, Sir, know, impressions are, perhaps, more easily made of wrong than of right. It is, however, my duty to endeavor to give them a right bias; and in that view, and encouraged by your request, to be informed in which way the intention of the Society might be further promoted in this Settlement, I beg leave to suggest the benefit that may result from the distribution of small religious tracts, and a church catechism, which I have lately seen, and which is highly spoken of. I know not whether a donation of this nature may come within the design of your Society, and therefore only hint this in the event of its extending so far.*

* The Committee were precluded, of course, from attending to that part of the Governor's letter which adverts to Tracts and Catechisms.

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"Allow me, Sir, to offer you my respectful thanks, and sincere wishes that the labors of the British and Foreign Bible Society may be crowned with that success and honor to which it is so eminently entitled in this world.

"I remain, with much respect, &c.

"DAVID COLLINS."

Rev. J. Owen.

But it is time to return to the domestic scene of operations; and to describe the state of progress in the metropolis of Great Britain, and in those parts of the United Kingdom with which the Society stood more immediately connected. In doing this, occasion will be taken to specify the different objects which now engaged the actual attention of the Committee, and constituted the matter of their own particular employment.

A primary object of this description, and one to the accomplishment of which much care and perseverance had been directed, was, as is well known, the production of a correct and copious impression of the Welsh Scriptures for the accommodation of the Principality. This object, after having been retarded by various causes of interruption, some of which have been pretty fully laid open, was at length, to a certain degree, attained. In the month of July, 1806, the New Testament having been completed, copies of it

were issued from the stereotype press, and put into distribution. It was a gratifying circumstance to find, that this Testament obtained a rapid sale; * and this gratification was heightened by the assurance given, on what was considered to be good authority, that "it surpassed in correctness any other which had yet been printed in the Welsh language."

Similar exertions to produce a supply of English Scriptures from the stereotype press, were attended with correspondent success. To the two editions of the Testament, which had been announced as completed at the second Anniversary, was added, in the course of this year, a Testament in a large type, and of great beauty, together with two editions of the entire Bible. These circumstances, which it might otherwise appear unimportant to specify, are thus particularly stated, in order to show the fidelity of the Society to the domestic

* The following account of the manner in which these Testaments were received, is given on the authority of "an eye-witness."

"When the arrival of the cart was announced, which carried the first sacred load, the Welsh peasants went out in crowds to meet it; welcomed it as the Israelites did the ark of old; drew it into the town; and eagerly bore off every copy, as rapidly as they could be dispersed. The young people were to be seen consuming the whole night in reading it. Laborers carried it with them to the field, that they might enjoy it during the intervals of their labor, and lose no opportunity of becoming acquainted with its sacred truths."

Christian Observer for July, 1810.

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object of its appointment. It will thus be seen, that its conductors were not so attentive to strangers as to forget those of their own household; and that they did not lose sight of a due provision for their own country, amidst their various and captivating engagements with foreign parts.

There is also an additional reason for this specification; inasmuch as it evinces the good effect of the encouragement given by the Society to that useful and ingenious art of stereotype, which has proved so serviceable an instrument in the propagation of the Scriptures, and in the maintenance of their purity and correctness. The editions which have been mentioned, were severally the first fruits of those stereotype plates, which had been cast at the instance, and under the special encouragement, of the Society; and the appearance of each specimen was an evidence, that plates had been prepared, from which editions to the amount of more than 200,000 copies might be taken off with economy and dispatch, as the exigencies of the country might require. In all these cases, it should be observed, the authorized text, without note or comment, was exclusively adopted. When this circumstance is duly considered, it will appear, that the British and Foreign Bible Society has promoted, in an eminent degree, the cause of orthodox Christianity, by pre-occupying that ground with the standard translation of the

Holy Scriptures, which might otherwise have been seized by the industrious propagators of novel and deteriorated versions.

This last observation will be strengthened by remarking, that the care of the Committee to produce these impressions of the Scriptures, was not greater than their activity in promoting the circulation of them when produced. With a view to facilitate the attainment of this end, the prices to subscribers were reduced, in the case of the English copies, twenty per cent. from the original cost; with the privilege of purchasing to the amount of five guineas for every guinea annually subscribed: life members being considered on the footing of annual members, and life governors, of annual governors. And in the case of the Welsh, the reduction was undefined and discretionary, affording, for the most part, a still greater accommodation to the circumstances of the subscribers. There was added, besides, in the regulations for the disposal of the Welsh Scriptures, this special indulgence, that Welsh Ministers in general might be supplied with copies at the regulated prices, *whether subscribers or not*, for the use of their respective congregations. This gratuitous extension of privilege to ministers of every religious denomination in Wales, was founded on a conviction, that the inhabitants of the Principality stood peculiarly in need of such accommodation; and the universality with which it was

granted to Ministers of the Establishment,* and to those of every other persuasion, comported with the catholic principle of the Institution, and evinced the disinterested wish of its conductors to effect the distribution of the sacred word through every accessible channel.

In the mean time, the doors were liberally thrown open for the admission of applications from societies and benevolent individuals, whose object was in any measure identified with that of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and whose exertions were directed to the dissemination of the Holy Scriptures in any part of the British empire. On this principle, copies were furnished at cost prices to the Dublin "Association," and the Dublin "Bible Society," in order to assist their means of doing good in their several departments; while to individuals in that kingdom, who had been accredited as zealously and disinterestedly employed in promoting the education of children, and the moral improvement of the poor, accommodation was afforded, according to the circumstances of the applicants, and the nature and extent of the services in which they were respectively engaged.

It ought also to be added, that no ordinary pains were bestowed upon the examination of the

* The reader will see how completely this refutes the insinuation, that the Society shewed particular favor to the Dissenters in the distribution of the Welsh Scriptures.

copies; with a view to determine the degree of correctness with which they were printed, and particularly to ascertain their exact conformity to the authoritative standard. In this work of laborious and minute investigation, several members of the Committee voluntarily participated; and no one embarked in it with more promptitude, or executed his engagement with more acuteness and perseverance, than a member of the Society of Friends, the late Wilson Birkbeck, Esq. This able and truly excellent individual read the first stereotyped Testament carefully through, collated it with an edition of established reputation, and presented, as the result of his researches, a string of passages, (amounting to thirty-six,) in which he had found the stereotyped edition to differ from those in ordinary use. On the subject of this report, and the measures taken in consequence of it, the following Minute appears upon the Society's Records, under date, February 3, 1806.

"Mr. Owen stated, that having received from Mr. Birkbeck a list of various readings in the New Testament, he had drawn out into separate columns such variations as occurred in the stereotype, an Oxford octavo, a copy of Blaney's edition, and King James's Black-Letter Bible; which sheet he had laid before the Syndics, who will exercise their judgment upon it. Mr. Owen had, however, found, that the stereotype reading

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was supported by that of King James's Bible, which Mr. Watts had been instructed to make his ultimate standard, with the exception of three or four instances, and these he apprehends will be corrected."

To those who know in what a variety of ways the Society has been attacked, and that, among them, one was the imputation of a design, and even more than a design, to pervert the text of Scripture, the mention of this circumstance, so demonstrative of an opposite conduct, will not appear indifferent. The fact which it contains was of material service to the author, in defending the Institution against the second attempt which was made to ruin it in the Spring of 1806; and in the Memorial* presented to the Bishop of London on that occasion, was inserted an observation in reference to this topic, which, as it has lost no part of its truth or its application by the lapse of more than nine years, it may not be amiss to extract.

"It should be observed" (referring to the Minute before-cited,) "that these variations were extremely minute: and this shows at once the correctness of the Cambridge Press, and the jealousy of a Dissenting Member of the Bible Society. Indeed, I am more than ever convinced, by the experience I have had in the Society's proceedings, that if it had been wished to pro-

* Chap. iii. p. 223.

vide an expedient for securing the integrity and correctness of the authorized version, such a wish could not have been better accomplished than by a Committee constituted as that is which sits at the New London Tavern."

With the measures which have been described for effecting the general distribution of the copies thus prepared, was combined a diligent attention to the supply of those wants which existed, in prisons and other places, removed from ordinary observation and concern.

Through the compassionate exertions of Thomas Furley Foster, Esq. who, as well as the other members of his family, is seen among the foremost in every public enterprise of humanity and mercy, the good offices of the Society were first solicited on behalf of the felons and other prisoners in Newgate; and 200 Testaments were placed under his care, to be distributed at his discretion.

The case of criminals, thus incidently brought forward, opened to the view of the Committee new scenes of spiritual wretchedness, and suggested to their minds a new and important department of benevolent labor. It was characteristic of the whole tenor of their proceedings, to avail themselves of every opening which might lead to the production of good; to resolve each case that came before them into the class to which it might be considered to belong; and to make the supply of a particular want the ground-work

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of some plan of comprehensive and general relief. Such was the course pursued in the business now under consideration.

The first resolution on behalf of the felons and other prisoners, took place on the 4th of August, 1806. This resolution was, on a renewed application, four months after, extended to *all* the prisons in the metropolis; and the views of the Committee enlarging with the progress of the information, they resolved to give wider scope to the exercise of their sympathy. For this end, they associated with the subjects of guilt the scarcely less pitiable victims of poverty and sickness; and appointed a Sub-Committee, whose office it should be to ascertain and supply the wants of the Holy Scriptures in the several Workhouses, Hospitals, and Goals, throughout the kingdom. That Sub-Committee entered into an active correspondence with the high sheriffs, chaplains, goalers, and superintendants of the sick and the poor; and the judgment and perseverance with which they discharged the duties of their appointment, were attended with the best effects.*

* It is pleasing to observe, that among the evidences of augmented exertion in the venerable Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, chiefly through the influence of its newly-formed Auxiliary Societies, is specified "a *more wakeful attention* to the spiritual necessities of the *indigent and afflicted;* to Schools and Hospitals, and other public charitable Institutions." *Annual Report for* 1814.

In this department of service, and particularly in that division of it which afforded the least promise of advantage, the supply of felons, the Committee experienced, in the very outset, a degree of encouragement, which stimulated them to proceed with increased liberality and exertion. It appeared that the first donation of Testaments to the convicts at Woolwich-Reach, amounting at that time to 800, found a very cordial reception among them. The officers on board the several ships judiciously allotted a Testament to each mess, accompanied with an order, that it should be forth-coming in good condition, whenever it might be called for; and Lieutenant Coxe, Commander of His Majesty's Brig, Woolwich, on whose application the Testaments had been furnished, declared, "that he never was witness to books given or received with more apparent satisfaction." This testimony, so grateful to the feelings of the conductors of the Society, and affording such evidence of the utility of their proceedings, was afterwards confirmed by the statement of an officer aboard the largest of the ships; who asserted, that having frequent occasion to go below deck, he seldom went down at the time when the convicts were at leisure, but he found some of them reading in the Testaments with which they had been supplied.

It will doubtless have occurred to the reader to remark, while perusing this account, how

materially the designs of the Society were forwarded by the ready and discreet co-operation of the officers commanding these convict-ships. It is scarcely possible to say too much in commendation of their conduct. They assured Lieutenant Coxe, on his first visit, " that they were much obliged to any individual, or any body of men, that felt themselves interested on behalf of those wretched men; and they would employ their influence to enforce a proper attention to any books which might be sent for the use of the convicts." The prudent regulations for distributing the books, and the satisfactory reports of their reception and use, sufficiently demonstrate, that this assurance was not given without a sincere intention to carry it into the completest effect.

The fact now stated affords occasion for repeating an observation which has already been made, in reference to the triumph of genuine principle over the difficulties attending situations of particular trial. It is, indeed, a delightful task to notice the bright traits of religion and humanity in the conduct of those who have been enabled to rise above the temptations connected with the duties of their professional employment. The peculiar service in which the several commanders of the convict-ships were engaged, had not so familiarized them to the contemplation of depravity and suffering, as to

contemplation of depravity and suffering, as to make them indifferent to the cure of the one, and the alleviation of the other. On the contrary, they showed themselves alive to the calls of the truest compassion; and evinced, by the encouragement they gave to the introduction of the Scriptures among the unhappy subjects of their authority, how justly they appreciated the influence of religion, as a source of genuine comfort, and a mean of radical and effectual reformation.

Nor were the exertions, of which the commencement has been recorded, for supplying the scriptural wants of the Prisoners of War, pursued with less vigour, or attended with inferior success. Copies of the Spanish Testament having been largely distributed among the prisoners of that nation, steps were taken without delay for preparing a second and more numerous impression. Inquiries had also been promoted into the state of the Prisoners of War generally; and the reader will see, with what discrimination and effect these inquiries were prosecuted, from the following account which they elicited, of the state of the prison-ships, and Mill-Prison at Plymouth.

"Of 5178 French Prisoners" (says the reporter, the late Captain Wynter, of Stonehouse,) "about 2820 can read, of whom about 2410 are desirous of having Testaments:" and "of 1700 Spanish

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prisoners, about 1200 can read, and 800 of them are desirous of having Testaments."

This statistical account was obtained in August, 1806; and, in the month of November following, the correspondent who furnished it, having been put in possession of the means of supplying those wants which he had so judiciously contrived to ascertain, transmitted the following animated and affecting description of the manner in which his first distribution had been made, and the impression with which it was attended.

"It is impossible to give you an adequate description of the anxiety that was manifested by the poor Spaniards to get possession of a Testament; many sought them with tears and earnest entreaties; and, although I had nearly enough for them all, yet it was with difficulty that they were pacified, until they received from my hand the word of eternal life. Since which I have witnessed the most pleasing sight that ever my eyes beheld--nearly a thousand poor Spanish prisoners, sitting round the prison walls, reading the word of God with an apparent eagerness that would have put many professing Christians to the blush!"

In consequence of this representation, confirmed by others of a similar tendency, it was determined to multiply copies both of the French and Spanish Scriptures, so as to have an adequate number ready for any emergency. A large

edition of the Testament in the latter of these languages was, as has been already mentioned, immediately put to press; and as those in the former were likely, from many causes, to be still more in request, proceedings were adopted, in the month of November, 1806, for printing them by stereotype.

While these measures were going forward, in reference to the continent of Europe, and to the residents in the United Kingdom, both natives and strangers, the attention of the Society was forcibly solicited to the case of Mahomedans and Heathens, whose spiritual instruction, too long overlooked by the bulk of European Christians, had begun to awaken, in the breasts of a few, the emotions of sympathy and anxious consideration.

This feeling naturally turned, in the first instance, towards the numerous inhabitants of India and the East, who answered to that description; and it will be proper to see what was done, or meditated, in reference to their spiritual welfare. Dr. Carey had introduced to the Society the scheme of Oriental Translations, so nobly projected by the Baptist Missionaries at Serampore. Dr. Buchanan's Memoir on "the Expediency of an Ecclesiastical Establishment for British India," had furnished the additional, and very important information, that, "under the auspices of the College of Fort William, the Scriptures were in

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a course of translation into almost all the languages of Oriental India." And both authorities agreed in stating, that assistance from Europe was indispensably necessary, in order to the accomplishment of these plans.

On these general grounds, it was determined to appropriate 1,000*l.* to an object, in all respects so deserving of encouragement and aid; and a grant to that amount was accordingly made, to be placed at the disposal of the Corresponding Committee at Calcutta. It is true, that Committee, though formally proposed,* had not actually been organized, at the time when the donation was voted. From many obstacles, some of which will be hereafter explained, the parties who were to constitute it, did not, and could not, come together for a considerable period after the proposition for associating them had been made. The presumption, however, of its existence had its use. It formed and preserved a rallying point for the zeal which was directed to the circulation of the Scriptures in India; gave an air of unity and order to the designs of the Society in that quarter; and kept alive the sentiment of concord among different Christians in this work of common interest, till circumstances afforded a favorable opportunity for bringing the parties into actual communication, and incorporating

* Chap. ii. p. 99.

them at length in a system of harmonious, compact, and efficient co-operation.

The feeling thus kindled on behalf of the natives of India, was not a little cherished by a communication received from Dr. Buchanan in August, 1806. This consisted of "Proposals for translating the Scriptures into the Oriental languages" from the Missionaries at Serampore; and a letter from himself, recommending, that a sermon should be preached before the Society "on the subject of Oriental Translations:" and requesting, "that the Reverend Preacher would do him the honor to accept the sum of 50*l.* on delivery of a printed copy of the sermon to his agents in London, for the College of Fort William in Bengal."

In the proposals for translations, the Serampore Missionaries thus express themselves:

"The design of translating the Scriptures into the Oriental languages, *has received from home the highest sanction.* A resolution to that effect has been transmitted to us by the Secretary of a Society lately instituted, entitled the British and Foreign Bible Society."

Then follows an account of the Society, and a copy of the resolution, proposing the formation of a Corresponding Committee in Bengal: after which the advertisers thus proceed:

"Our hope of success in this great undertaking depends chiefly on the patronage of the College

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of Fort William. To that Institution we are much indebted for the progress we have already made. Oriental translation has become comparatively easy, in consequence of our having the aid of those learned men from distant provinces of Asia, who have assembled, during the period of the last six years, at that great emporium of Eastern Letters. These intelligent strangers voluntarily engage with us in translating the Scriptures into their respective languages; and they do not conceal their admiration of the sublime doctrine, pure precept, and divine eloquence, of the word of God. The plan of these translations was sanctioned, at an early period, by the Most Noble the Marquis Wellesley, that great Patron of useful learning. To give the Christian Scriptures to the inhabitants of Asia, is indeed a work which every man who believes these Scriptures to be from God, will approve. In Hindoostan alone, there is a great variety of religions; and there are some tribes which have no certain cast or religion at all. To render the revealed religion accessible to men who desire it; to open its eternal sanctions and display its pure morals to those who seek a religion, is to fulfil the sacred duty of a Christian people; and accords well with the humane and generous spirit of the English nation."

The statements contained in this printed document were considered of importance, not only

as they publicly developed a plan for Oriental translations; but also because they recognized the fact of deriving aid and patronage from the College of Fort William, and announced the formation and the friendship of the British and Foreign Bible Society, as furnishing material encouragement to the proposed undertaking.

It may not be out of place to observe, that the printed document thus transmitted by Dr. Buchanan, "was composed by himself, partly from materials furnished by the Missionaries."* Copies were dispatched to almost the whole of the principal civil officers, and to many of the military officers in the Honorable Company's Service, throughout Hindoostan, from Delhi to Travancore: and Dr. Buchanan obtained permission, at the same time, to send the "Proposals" in his official character, as the Vice-Provost of the College, free of expense; which he did, accompanying them in most instances with a letter. The design received encouragement from every quarter: a sum of 1600*l.* was soon raised for translations, to which the late Rev. David Brown contributed 250*l.*† These circumstances, so honorable to Dr. Buchanan, were not made publicly known till the year 1813; and they are mentioned in connection with his communication of 1806, to show, that neither on

* See Apology for Christianity in India, p. 67.

† Id. p. 68.

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the part of Dr. Buchanan, nor of the British and Foreign Bible Society, did there exist any disposition to supersede the Serampore Missionaries; and to confirm what has appeared from the admission of the latter, that the Missionaries were indebted for not a little of their success to the countenance and good offices of both.

The proposition for a sermon, which formed the other part of Dr. Buchanan's communication, was at first acceded to; and the author of this History was requested to become the preacher. It was, however, upon re-consideration, unanimously agreed, that, as the measure did not fall strictly within the professed object of the Society, and might open a door to practical irregularities, it would not be expedient to sanction its adoption. The generous offer of Dr. Buchanan was, in consequence of this decision, respectfully declined.

To what has been advanced on the subject of India, it may be added, that shortly before the close of the third year, a still more express and encouraging communication was received from Calcutta. The particulars conveyed through it will be hereafter considered. It may be sufficient, therefore, for the present, to say, that the tenor of it was deemed so satisfactory as to justify the contribution of still further assistance; and a second grant of 1,000*l.* was accordingly

voted, on the terms and for the purposes specified in the record of the first.

With this solicitude for the encouragement of Oriental translations abroad, was connected a not less anxious concern for attempting something of a similar description, through the means which offered themselves at home. The Arabic presented a medium through which the light of divine revelation might be widely diffused among the inhabitants of Africa and the East; and a resolution was formed to take the propriety and practicability of printing some portion at least of the Scriptures in that language, into immediate and serious consideration.

It is due to the memory of Bishop Porteus to observe, that the design originated in a proposition, made by the author at the Bishop's express recommendation. The proceedings adopted in pursuit of the object were stimulated by his Lordship's earnest appeals, in his own name, and that of his friend, the Bishop of Durham, on behalf of "Heathen and Mahomedan nations." "It is a measure" (says the Bishop*) "which both myself and the Bishop of Durham (with whom I have lately corresponded on the subject) have exceedingly at heart, and we are anxious that it should be entered upon without delay. It would, I am confident, do great credit to the

* In a private letter from Sundridge, dated September 29, 1806.

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Society, and might be of infinite service in sowing the seeds of Christianity over the whole continent of Africa."

The cordiality with which his Lordship's recommendation was received, and the alacrity manifested in the arrangements for ascertaining the best mode of giving it effect, appear (from a subsequent letter,)* to have afforded the Bishop very high satisfaction, and to have warmed his bosom with a prospect which the course of events encourages us to hope, will, in due time, be literally realized. "Heathen and Mahomedan nations" (exclaims the Bishop, striking again his favorite chord) "ought certainly to be our first and principal object; and I cannot help flattering myself with the hope, that, by the exertions of the Bengal Society in the East," (meaning the Corresponding Committee,) "and those of the Bible Society in the West, the seeds of the Christian religion will, in less than half a century, be sown in every unenlightened country throughout the world—a consummation most devoutly to be wished."

So multifarious and important were the occupations and engagements of the Society, when the approach of the third Anniversary admonished the Committee to prepare for another appearance before their constituents, and, through them, before

* Oct. 11, 1806.

the whole Christian community. The extension of the Society's connections on the continent of Europe; the actual attainment of some important objects, and the reasonable anticipation of others; the steady support of its *annual*, and the encouraging liberality of its *occasional** contributors; and above all, the approved excellence of the cause itself, the evidence of the good which it had done, and the prospect of that which, in its advancement to maturity, it might justly be expected to accomplish:—these, and kindred topics, furnished materials for another luminous report, to that distinguished individual, who, though debilitated by sickness, and more than usually occupied at this crisis by domestic avocations, would not refuse to employ his pen again in the service of a Society which his Lordship declared he "conscientiously believed to be no less useful than zealous and active."

The Anniversary day at length arrived: the chamber was crouded with guests, and the festival was celebrated in a manner becoming the sacred and benevolent object to which it was dedicated. The Noble President recounted, from the chair,

* The late Countess of Bath had presented the Institution with a donation of 1,000*l*. For this munificent addition to its funds, the Society was particularly indebted to the zealous intervention of Christopher Sundius, Esq.; and the Committee testified their sense of that gentleman's services on this, and on other occasions, by appointing him an honorary life governor of the Institution.

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the great things which God had wrought through the ministry of the Society; and encouraged the members, while rejoicing in these, to attempt and anticipate the achievement of still greater.

A severe indisposition prevented the Rev. Mr. Steinkopff from taking a share in the proceedings of the day. A letter dispatched from his sick-chamber, compensated, in some measure, for the loss of those accents, which, as the organ of foreign gratitude, were always listened to with affectionate admiration. After expressing his acknowledgments, in the name of his countrymen, for what had been done for the Bible Societies in Germany, and enumerating certain facts illustrative of the progress of the British and Foreign Bible Society, Mr. Steinkopff thus proceeds:

"Are not these important foreign operations? Is there not abundant cause to congratulate the Society on the success already obtained? And may we not reasonably anticipate a still more glorious and triumphant progress of the word of God in all directions? Permit me to add, that I feel myself so great a debtor to the Society, and to the British public at large, for their handing out so richly, not only the bread that perisheth for the relief of my distressed German countrymen, but likewise the heavenly manna, that I feel myself called upon, in the most forcible manner, not only to wish them in return the

richest blessings of heaven, but also to exert the small share of talent that God has given me, for the promotion of the noble purpose of the Society; and esteem it my glory and happiness to render it every service in my power. Finally; may that God under whose supreme direction, I trust, this Society has been established, and its labors evidently owned and blessed, crown all its further operations with a rich measure of His divine wisdom, energy, and success: so that His word may run and be glorified, to the praise of His excellent name, and the salvation of many immortal souls."

A temporary gloom, thrown over the assembly by the absence of the Bishop of Durham, was happily removed by the unexpected appearance of another Episcopal Patron, the Bishop of Exeter, (now Salisbury,) whose countenance, at that time new to the members of the Society, has since been rendered familiar, by the regularity of his Lordship's attendance at the Anniversary Meetings.

Thus consentaneously did the Members of the British and Foreign Bible Society rally, for the third time, round the standard of the Institution. Renewing their pledges of mutual co-operation, and gathering encouragement for the future from a reflection upon the past, they seemed to breathe one common resolution; of which the following

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language might perhaps have served as no unfit interpretation.

"If it has pleased Divine Providence, that Great Britain should be the almoner of His bounty to a needy world; if it is His will that she should hold up the torch of revelation to the bewildered nations, and guide their feet to truth and happiness; it must be ours to obey this high dispensation, to rise with the rising exigences of our condition, and to proportion our zeal and our exertions to the vast sphere of duty in which it is our privilege to be employed. Let us then prosecute those measures on which we have entered, with increasing alacrity and steadfastness: let us co-operate with each other in upholding that Institution which projects the universal melioration of the world: nor let us ever desist from our labor, or relax in our diligence, till, through its instrumentality, the Bible shall have accomplished its office, and sealed its triumph, in the union of Christians, and the happiness of mankind."*

* Speech of the author at the formation of the Kentish Auxiliary Bible Society.

CHAPTER V.

1807—8.

THE facts and observations contained in the Third Report, as recited by the President at the Anniversary Meeting, appeared to the Bishop of Exeter to carry so much conviction in favor of the Society, that, with a laudable anxiety to communicate to others an impression similar to that which he had himself received, his Lordship, upon retiring from the assembly, requested to be furnished with a number of copies, as soon as they should be ready for delivery from the press. This request was complied with; and the Bishop availed himself of the opportunity afforded by a Visitation which he performed, as the representative of the Bishop of London, at that time indisposed, to circulate the Report, through the hands of the Officiating Chaplain, the Rev. Mr. Potchett,* among the clergy who attended on that public occasion. With what effect this distribution was followed, it would not be easy to deter-

* Now Rector of Fairstead, Essex; at that time Domestic Chaplain to Bishop Porteus.

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mine. The probability is, that it contributed materially to promote the Society's interests. Had it failed in producing any other benefit, it would have been highly advantageous, as evincing the sincerity of the Bishop's attachment to the Institution, and giving a solemn contradiction to the charge of its incompatibility with a strict regard to the interest and the honor of the Established Church.

The termination of the Society's third year had been enlivened by a communication from Calcutta* expressly directed to the object for which a Corresponding Committee had been proposed in that place. The writer was the Rev. D. Brown, Senior Chaplain at Fort William, to whom the proposition for a Corresponding Committee had been originally directed, and in whom the reader may recognize the future Secretary, both of that Committee, and of the Calcutta Auxiliary Bible Society.

The communication from this zealous agent was dated September 13, 1806, and it was valuable not more on account of its favorable representation of the state of Oriental translations, than of its concurrence with the letter of Dr. Buchanan, and the printed proposals from Serampore, in evincing the impression made at Calcutta, by the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the good

* Chap. ii. p. 280.

effect of the encouragement which it held out, on the spirits and the labors of the translators. "I believe" (says Mr. Brown) "no plan for the diffusion of true religion was ever formed, from the beginning of the world, that embraced so wide a scope, or met with such general approbation."

A regular intercourse now commenced between the conductors of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the leading friends of Christianity in the heart of British India; and it appeared to the former in a high degree desirable to take all practicable steps in order to cherish and improve the connection. With this view, the second grant of 1,000*l.* was made on the 4th of May, 1807, as has been before observed; and on the 15th of June, it was further determined to send 500 English Bibles and 1,000 Testaments, from the London Depository, and 250 German Bibles, and 500 Testaments, from the Institution at Halle, for the use of the army and navy, and other poor Europeans in India. The former were dispatched to the Rev. D. Brown, as the organ of the presumed Corresponding Committee; the latter to the German Missionaries, wherever they might be stationed: and the copies were directed to be disposed of, either by sale or gratuitous distribution, at the discretion of the parties to whom they were respectively consigned.

This measure, which originated in the spontaneous attention of the Society to the spiri-

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tual improvement of India, was afterwards proved to have been peculiarly seasonable, and to have furnished in some instances the means of supplying those wants, which, but for such assistance, must have remained altogether without remedy or relief. This was particularly the case in respect to the English Scriptures transmitted to Calcutta. They were described, in a letter from Mr. Brown, dated April 28, 1808, (which it may not be improper here to anticipate,) as constituting "a most needful supply." Several Chaplains had expended large sums from their private incomes to meet the exigences of the people under their care. "The Bibles and Testaments" (continues this correspondent) "will be distributed among them; and as the people are willing to pay a moderate price, the sums received shall be accounted for to the Society." To this statement, Mr. Brown, in the fulness of his heart, annexes the following animated prayer for the success of the Institution. "May that God whose word you honor, and who has put it into your hearts to send it forth into all lands, bless and prosper your Society, and make it the joy of the whole earth!'

It must not, however, be dissembled, that, with the pleasing and auspicious intelligence respecting the progress of the Society's cause in India, was mingled information of a very painful and discouraging nature. As the communication was

altogether confidential, and the particulars were of a description to involve the character of the British Government in Bengal, their publication was suppressed. The improvement which has taken place in the system of Oriental Administration, renders such reserve no longer necessary; and as the Reporter is placed beyond the reach of injury, or of censure, the author will extract so much from his communication as may be sufficient to acquaint the reader with this critical portion of the Society's History.

In the letter of the Rev. D. Brown, dated September 13, 1806, a part of which, as furnishing very satisfactory intelligence, was laid before the public, an explicit account was given of the causes of that delay which had prevented the formation of the Corresponding Committee, and the adoption of a systematical plan for translating and printing the Sacred Scriptures. The substance of this account will be found in the following extract:

"You will justly wonder why we have been so slow in replying to your letter, inviting us to co-operate with you. I answer in one word. We have lost Lord Wellesley, the friend of religion, and the patron of learning; and succeeding governors have opposed all attempts to evangelize the Hindoos; have opposed the translation of the Holy Scriptures; have opposed the formation of a Society for carrying into effect, here, the objects

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of your invaluable Institution. Persons holding official situations were requested not to act, except in their private capacity. We have, therefore, been obliged to commit the work, for the present, to the Society of Missionaries at Serampore, and afford them such aid and protection as we can give without offending Government."

The tidings contained in this statement, the fidelity of which has since been established by the late Dr. Buchanan, in his Apology for Christianity in India, filled the hearts of those to whom they were, in confidence, communicated, with unfeigned sorrow and dejection. They could not look upon this dark cloud which intercepted their prospects of usefulness in the East, without dismay; and, though determined to persevere, they were almost tempted to despair of seeing the cause of the British and Foreign Bible Society espoused by the public Authorities in India. Nothing remained to support their resolution under this depressing intelligence, but the testimony of that approbation with which the plan of the Society had been generally received, and the exercise of that faith in the promised universality of Christian truth, which to every believing mind gives the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.

The lively interest which Bishop Porteus took in all the vicissitudes of the Institution, appeared to require that he should not remain uninformed

of the opposition which was made to its progress in that quarter from which he had been led to entertain such sanguine expectations. In this opinion Mr. Brown, to whom his Lordship's character, and particularly his solicitude for the propagation of Christianity in the East, were thoroughly known, perfectly coincided. Under these circumstances, the author considered it his duty to lay the whole correspondence before the Bishop; and the following communication from his Lordship will show what were his sentiments and feelings on this trying occasion.

" I am extremely concerned to see the hostility of the Bengal Government, both to the translation and dispersion of the Sacred Scriptures in the Oriental languages, and to the exertions of the Bible Society in *foreign* countries. From what cause does this sudden change arise? Whatever be the cause, I hope Lord Teignmouth and Mr. Grant, who are now both in office in the Indian Department, and have considerable influence with the India Directors, the Board of Controul, and the Bengal Government, will exert themselves speedily and vigorously to remove that cause, and the gross misrepresentations which must have operated on the minds of the governing powers in Bengal; and endeavour to render them, as soon as possible, friendly and favorable to the Oriental and the British Bible Societies: as I think the future conversion and salvation of the

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natives of that vast continent do in a great degree depend on the successful progress of those two Societies."

The author has thus exhibited a compendious statement of the real causes which defeated, for a season, the accomplishment of the Society's favorite design in British India—the incorporation of Christians throughout the Peninsula in one common scheme for diffusing the light of Holy Scripture among the inhabitants of the East. This explanation was due to the character of the Society. It will account to the reader for the limited and dubious nature of its operations in that quarter during the early years of its existence; prepare him for better understanding the true ground of that conflict in which he is ere long to find it involved; and enable him to discern with more exactness the track by which it was conducted, through discouragement and opposition, to triumph and success.

Among the plans connected with foreign parts, which were resumed by the Committee, upon the renovation of their functions, after the third anniversary, may be enumerated, as deserving particular attention, those which regarded the printing of the Scriptures in the Calmuc, the Tartar, the Arabic, and the Icelandic languages.

Certain queries addressed by the Rev. Mr. Steinkopff to the Head of the Moravian Mission at Sarepta, together with a letter from the author

to the Head of the Scotch Mission at Karass, succeeded in eliciting information upon the number, language, and general habits of the Calmucs, which threw considerable light on the first of those objects, and assisted materially the conductors of the Society in forming their judgment upon the importance and the practicability of its attainment.

From the intelligence thus supplied, it appeared that the number of Calmucs in the Steppe, viz. from Sarepta to the Caucasus, amounted to nearly 20,000 souls. These were Pagans: beside which, in a separate district upon the banks of the Wolga, were, baptized Calmucs, who, for more than 100 years, in consequence of the labors of the Russian Clergy, had professed Christianity, and had regular church-service according to the rites of the National Church. The mode of life adopted by the Calmucs, was represented to be vagrant and nomadic; and their customs and manners, both in temporal and spiritual affairs, with scarcely any alteration, such as they had been 1000 years ago. All their clergy, and the higher orders of the community, were able to read and write; but no great encouragement could be offered to hope that they would read the Bible. Little effect had yet been produced by the missionary labors of the Moravian Brethren among the Calmucs. A few had given a cold assent to the doctrine of the Gospel; but most of them,

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especially their clergy, who form a particular body, were found to reject, or even deride, this doctrine, as an innovation prejudicial to their system. Some detached portions both of the Old and the New Testament had been translated by persons, who, without possessing the advantages "of a literary education, had a good understanding of the sense of the Scriptures, felt an impulse of the heart to the task, and had already acquired a pretty complete knowledge of the Calmuc language." No part, however, of the translations hitherto made, had been printed, as there was no printing press at Sarepta, or indeed in the whole country: but if types were furnished from England, or from St. Petersburg, the work might be executed correctly at the latter place. To these particulars it should be added, that the number of Calmuc characters, written specimens of which were transmitted, amounted to one hundred and fifty-two.

Such was the substance of the information derived from these respectable sources; and although the general effect of it was calculated rather to discourage, than to invite, exertion, yet the object was considered of too great moment to be hastily relinquished: it was therefore determined to pursue it. A sum of money was accordingly granted for the purchase of a set of types at St. Petersburg; (it being understood that they could be procured in that capital, at a moderate

price:) and this grant was accompanied with a strong recommendation to the translators, to proceed in their labors, and to expect, as they advanced, a proportionate degree of aid and encouragement.

What has here been stated, describes the humble commencement of a work which has since acquired a very interesting character, and promises eventually to rank with the most creditable and important of the Society's productions. Subsequent information evinced, that the sphere to which this object related, is of surprising extent; and numerous particulars of a very interesting nature have been added to those which first determined the conductors of the Society to the adoption of the measure. Among other things, it has been ascertained, that the Calmucs in the Steppe, instead of being, as before computed, 20,000 souls, consist of at least 20,000 tents, and of a population exceeding 60,000 souls. Beside these, it is estimated that there are 10,000 without these limits, who have embraced Christianity. The Calmucs are represented as constituting only one division of the Mongols; who are distributed into the *Mongols proper*, the *Burgats*, and the *Calmucs*. The language of the last is a dialect of the Mongolian: but the written language is nearly the same in all. Add to which, that 65,000 families, speaking the Calmuc language, migrated from Russia in 1771, and now live under the protection of China.

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In this view of the subject, a translation of the Scriptures into the Calmuc dialect, though attended with many obstacles, both as to its accomplishment, and its distribution, was justly regarded as an object of great importance.*

On the version encouraged by the Society there will be occasion to speak more particularly hereafter. It may be proper, however, to add to what has been stated, that the obstacles referred to were progressively removed: and that there appeared at length a strong probability, that the translation would be faithfully executed; and, when completed, would circulate among a population, extending from the banks of the Wolga to the regions of Thibet and China.

The preparation of types for the Tartar New Testament was diligently followed up by the Rev. Dr. Adam Clarke, to whose learned and judicious superintendance this concern had been implicitly confided. A scale of types constructed

* The language in which Mr. Hiemer expresses himself, upon hearing (which he did "with much interest") of the resolution in regard to the Calmuc translation, may be considered as describing pretty accurately the views of the London Committee in reference to this undertaking.

"Great as the obstacles are to the propagation of the Gospel among this heathenish tribe, yet I think attempts made in reliance on the command and promise of the Lord, for the extension of His kingdom, will never remain quite without a blessing; and, *even should they not succeeed*, a double blessing will return on those who make the attempt from love to their Divine Master."

by himself, and executed with singular beauty, was submitted to the consideration of the Committee; and a fount was cast agreeably to the model recommended by Dr. Clarke, and sanctioned by the approbation of the President and other competent judges of Oriental literature. The types, thus produced, together with paper and ink for 5,000 copies, were dispatched early in this year; and though conveyed through the seat of war, arrived, without experiencing either injury or delay, at the place of their destination.

A third object of attention was the consideration of printing and publishing the Scriptures in the Arabic language. This business, which had been commenced in the preceding year, was, in this, resumed and prosecuted, with a degree of earnest and careful investigation, becoming the importance of the undertaking, and the many difficulties of a literary nature in which the execution of it was involved. In order to explain the course which was pursued, and the measures in which it terminated, it will be necessary to advert to the steps taken by the late Professor Carlyle, with a view to the attainment of a similar object.

In the year 1803, the Rev. J. D. Carlyle, B. D. Chancellor of the Diocese of Carlisle, and Professor of Arabic in the University of Cambridge, desirous of exciting the public attention to the

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dispersion of the Scriptures in the Arabic language, issued a prospectus of a plan for printing by subscription an edition of the Arabic Bible, under the patronage of the Lord Bishop of Durham; urging, in its recommendation, a variety of encouraging circumstances, and particularly the prevalence of the Arabic language in Africa; and both the qualification and the fondness of the Africans for reading Arabic books, as attested by the Sierra Leone Company, the celebrated Mungo Park, Browne, and other respectable authorities.

The following extracts from the Professor's Prospectus, will show the general grounds on which he recommended the undertaking, and the zeal and disinterestedness with which he engaged to superintend its execution.

"Mr. Park thinks that, in the western part of the Continent, the knowledge of Arabic reaches to the 11th or even 10th degree of North latitude. He agrees with several of the travellers from Sierra Leone, in representing the negro inhabitants as having arrived at a very considerable degree of civilization. They can almost all read and write the Arabic language, in which they are regularly instructed; the poorer sort, by public masters at village schools, the richer, by private tutors at their parents' houses. The native under whose hospitable roof he resided

for several months, maintained a master to teach Arabic to his own children, and permitted sixteen others, the children of his poorer neighbours, to learn at the same time.

" According to Mr. Park, the negroes are proud of their literature, and seldom travel without a book slung by their side. Amongst their books he has perceived the Pentateuch, the Book of Psalms, and the Prophet Isaiah. All of these they prize very highly; and such is the general eagerness to obtain them, that he believes no articles would be more saleable in Africa than copies of the Scriptures in Arabic. He has seen a copy of the Pentateuch alone, sold at the price of one prime slave, *i. e.* about 20 guineas.*

* The following is one among the passages to which the Professor alludes. — " On interrogating the schoolmaster at Kamalia, I discovered that the Negroes are in possession (among other MSS.) of an Arabic version of the Pentateuch of Moses, which they call *Taureta la Moosa.* This is so highly esteemed, that it is often sold for the value of one prime slave. They have likewise a version of the Psalms of David; (*Zabora Davidi ;*) and lastly, the book of Isaiah, which they call *Lingeeli la Isa,* and it is in very high esteem.

" By these means many of the Negroes that are converted from being *Kafirs* (Pagans) to the religion of Mahomed, have acquired an acquaintance with some of the remarkable events recorded in the Old Testament—the account of our First Parents; the Death of Abel; the Deluge; the Lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the Story of Joseph and his Brethren; the History of Moses, David, Solomon, &c. All these have been related to me, in the *Mandingo* language, with tolerable exactness by different people: and my surprise was not greater,

" Their MSS. however, were not elegantly written; and they greatly preferred the printed characters which he shewed them in Richardson's Grammar, to any writing of their own. This grammar many of them were extremely solicitous to purchase, and he was offered for it above three pounds sterling: he was at last obliged to leave the book behind him, as too valuable a treasure to be taken out of the country.

" Such is the present situation of the most populous part of Africa. The inhabitants have acquired some knowledge of Scripture—they seem desirous of acquiring more; and surely it is a consideration well worthy attention, that the religious knowledge already imparted has been owing, not to Christian, but to Mahomedan exertions. The light, however, which they have

on hearing these accounts from the lips of the Negroes, than theirs was on finding that I was already acquainted with them. For, although the Negroes in general have a very great idea of the wealth and power of the Europeans, I am afraid that the Mahomedan converts among them, think but very lightly of our religious knowledge. The white traders, in the maritime districts, take no pains to counteract this unhappy prejudice. To me, therefore, it was not so much the subject of wonder as of regret, to observe, that, while the superstition of Mahomed has in this manner scattered a few beams of learning among these poor people, the precious light of Christianity is altogether withheld. I could not but lament, that, although the coast of Africa has now been known and frequented by the Europeans for more than 200 years, yet the Negroes still remain entire strangers to the doctrines of our holy religion."

Travels in 1799.

kindled, we may cherish and increase: the Koran, we see, has led on to the reception of the historical parts of Scripture, with which, indeed, it is in various places intimately connected. The historical books have introduced some of the most essential of the prophetic—Why then should we despair, that these, when united in the same volume with the Gospel, referring to the same objects as it does, interwoven with every part of its texture, may not be a means of inducing the Africans to consider the foundation of Christianity, and to embrace its doctrines?"

"The work," (adds the Professor,) "it is conceived, can scarcely be completed in less than a year and a half, or two years; but such is the high sense the writer entertains of the benefits likely to result from it, that he will gladly allot to it whatever time and labor it may require. At the same time, he wishes it to be explicitly understood, that he has no view whatever to personal emolument; and he suggests it as the most satisfactory mode of conducting the business, that a Committee be appointed, to which he should be at liberty to state the accounts, and which should finally settle the price necessary to be put upon the work, in order to reimburse the actual expenditure."

The unexpected death of Professor Carlyle,

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while engaged in preparing the copy for the press, and some difficulties arising out of the contract for the types, occasioned a considerable embarrassment, and put a stop, for a period, to the projected undertaking.

It was during this interval that the British and Foreign Bible Society conceived the design,* of promoting a correct and acceptable impression of the Arabic Scriptures. The subject underwent very serious and repeated examination; and an extended correspondence was carried on with the Bishops of London and Durham, the Professors of Arabic in both our Universities, and other persons of competent information, with a view to the ascertainment of a standard text, and such other points as required to be accurately known previously to a formal and conclusive determination.

In the course of this inquiry, the Committee derived very material assistance both from the Rev. Mr. Usko, and the Rev. Dr. Adam Clarke.† These Gentlemen severally delivered their respective opinions on the quality of the existing

* Chap. iii. p. 281.

† Among those who offered to co-operate in producing a new edition of the Arabic Bible, was the Rev. George Renouard, Fellow of Sidney College, Cambridge, successively Chaplain at Constantinople, and at Smyrna. This Gentleman very kindly tendered his services to correct the press, if it were determined that the edition should be printed at Cambridge.

versions, the peculiarities of Oriental typography, and other matters of learned detail. Each regarded the text of the Polyglott as requiring correction: and both agreed in the absolute expediency of printing the Scriptures in the Arabic language: as "the very great importance of an Arabic Bible" (said Mr. Usko) "must strike every unprejudiced mind; considering that the Arabic language is one of the most extensive that exists perhaps on the surface of our globe." Dr. Clarke expressed himself to the same effect, with great earnestness and decision, at the close of one of his communications to the President of the Society.

"A pure edition of the Arabic Scriptures is still a desideratum in Biblical literature. The time, I hope, is at hand, in which it shall cease to be so. Under the auspices and direction of your Lordship, and the British and Foreign Bible Society, I am led confidently to expect an edition of the Arabic Bible, which shall be worthy of the subject, a credit to your Lordship and the Society, and an honor to the British Nation."

The caution with which the conductors of the Society felt it their duty to proceed, in a case wherein so little appeared to have been correctly done, and such a diversity of opinions continued to prevail on the best mode of doing

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any thing, protracted the investigation till the obstacles which impeded the late Professor Carlyle's undertaking had been completely removed, and that work was announced as in train for immediate execution. The Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society, finding their own plans altogether immature, and unwilling to sacrifice any further to delay, determined to subscribe for 300 copies, as a temporary expedient, and accompanied that determination with an express resolution to defer printing an edition on their own account, till by an extension of their inquiries they should have obtained more exact and satisfactory information.

It has since appeared, that the hesitation of the Committee to embark in an impression, with the limited and insufficient materials which they at that time possessed, was not greater than the occasion demanded. The text of the Polyglott, adopted in Professor Carlyle's edition, which (as it has appeared) both Mr. Usko and Dr. A. Clarke had pronounced to be incorrect, has been declared by the late learned, pious, and enterprizing Martyn, to be defective in printing and elegance: and the new Arabic version of Sabat, by which it is to be superseded in India, promises, upon the same high authority, corroborated by many other testimonies, to supply,

most effectually, this great desideratum in Biblical literature.*

While, however, so much is said in depreciation of the current text, it ought, in justice, to be observed, that the strictures are founded chiefly upon a critical reference to the language as vernacular in Arabia; and do not invalidate the claims of that text to respect, as, upon the whole, a faithful vehicle of the divine word, and

* In a letter of the Rev. H. Martyn's, from Shiraz, dated June 4, 1811, there is the following passage:

"Of the Arabic version of the Polyglott, the late Professor Carlyle, in his copy of proposals for printing a new edition of it, speaks in the highest terms, and observes, that it was used both by Jews and Christians as a faithful and elegant representation of their respective books of faith. But even supposing that both Jews and Christians are satisfied with the translation, no one who has had an opportunity of observing the degraded state of these people in the East, would admit them as competent judges of the Arabic. The Professor has adduced, in favor of the version in question, the opinions of Erpenius, Gabriel Sionita, and Pocock, names of high consideration in Arabic learning, particularly the last, who, from his long residence at Aleppo and Constantinople, had great opportunities of judging. It is certain, however, that such of the Mahomedans as have seen this version, think very differently of it."

Mr. Martyn further states, that he had shown to a learned Arab at Bushire, Erpenius's Arabic Testament, the Bartlett's Buildings' edition, Sabat's, and the Polyglott. "After rejecting all but Sabat's," (observes Mr. Martyn,) "he said: 'This is good, very good:' and then read off the 5th chapter of St. Matthew in a fine style, giving it unqualified commendation as he went along."

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an instrument of approved usefulness in the propagation of Christianity among Heathen nations.

Before dismissing this topic altogether, it may not be amiss to relate a circumstance, which, though considerably posterior in date, will be found to connect very properly with the decision of the Committee, as already recorded.

Of the 300 copies of the Arabic Bible, obtained through the medium of the above-mentioned subscription, twelve were put into circulation by an occurrence which deserves to be particularly noticed. A missionary, in the service of the Church Missionary Society, to whose care these copies had been assigned, was unfortunately wrecked on the coast of Africa. A portion of the cargo redeemed from the waves, was sold to the natives, and of it these Arabic Bibles formed a part. The missionary made every effort in his power to re-purchase them: but without success. As much as 8*l.* was offered for a copy, but refused: the Mahomedan natives persisting in their resolution not to part with them on any terms.

This event, which took place in the Spring of 1813, is introduced in this place as affording a confirmation of the intelligence upon which the proceedings of the Committee in this instance were founded--that Arabic Bibles would obtain

a ready circulation among the Mahomedan natives of Africa.

As the assistance of Dr. Adam Clarke, in the Arabic business, has been referred to, it appears proper to state, that, with the expression of their thanks for this and other eminent services, which had cost him no ordinary sacrifice both of time and of labor, the Committee requested permission to present the Doctor with 50*l.*: an offering which that learned and public-spirited individual respectfully but peremptorily declined to accept. Gratuitous exertions in the cause of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and refusals to accept pecuniary returns have abounded so greatly in every period of its history, that it is not intended, nor would it indeed be practicable, to specify the occasions on which they have been made. Dr. Clarke is, however, not to be classed with ordinary benefactors; and the circumstance has been mentioned principally with a view of introducing his reply to the Committee's address--a document, which the author of this History considers as too important to be sacrificed to the modesty of living merit.

To Messrs. Reyner and Mills.

" Gentlemen,

" With great respect and gratitude I return the ***Fifty Pounds*** which have been kindly sent

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me by the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society. To no principle whence my services proceeded, and to no feeling of my heart, can I reconcile the acceptance of the Society's bounty. What I have done, was for the sake of God and his truth; and I feel myself greatly honored in having a part in this blessed work, and only regret, that I have, probably, but a short time to devote to so useful an employment. To have, in any measure, deserved the respectful attention with which my feeble services have been honored by the Committee, is a subject of sufficient gratification to my mind, and brings with it the amplest remuneration.

"God forbid that I should receive any part of the Society's funds:—let this money therefore return to its source; and if it be the instrument of carrying but one additional Bible to any place or family, previously destitute of the words of eternal life, how much reason shall I have to thank God that it never became part of *my* property!

"Have the goodness to assure the Committee of my perfect readiness, whether present or absent, to promote, as far as my time and abilities may permit, the great objects of this most benevolent Association; which, like the Apocalyptic angel, is flying through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to

every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.

" I am, Gentlemen,

" With best respects to the Committee,

" Your very affectionate fellow-laborer,

" In the British and Foreign Bible Society,

" A. CLARKE."

City Road, June 20, 1807.

It remains now to state what was done in furtherance of the last foreign object mentioned in the general enumeration—the printing of the Icelandic Scriptures.

The reader has been informed, that it was determined, on the 6th of October, 1806, to co-operate with the Danish Society in Fühnen, by bearing the expense of 3,000 copies of the Icelandic Testament, in addition to 2,000 which that Society had engaged to print at Copenhagen, on its own account. Of this resolution a communication was speedily made, both to the Fühnen Society, and to Mr. Paterson, who, by desire of that Society, had consented to charge himself with the executive conduct of the business. The work having been finished, and the copies bound, 1,500 were dispatched to different parts of Iceland by the ships which sailed for that island in the Spring of 1807. The war between England and Denmark prevented the transmission of the remaining copies;

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and the bombardment of Copenhagen, which followed shortly after, threatened them with seemingly inevitable destruction. That destruction was, however, averted; and this inflammable treasure preserved in the midst of a conflagration which laid almost every thing around it in ashes. Two bombs are stated to have entered the house where the unbound copies were lying: and the warehouse which contained the 500 bound copies, designed as a present to the Bishop of Iceland, was nearly burnt to the ground, *that part only having escaped the flames in which these copies were deposited.*

In the mean time, the copies dispatched to Iceland reached in safety the places to which they had been consigned. The Fühnen Society, which had undertaken to transmit them, used the precaution to have them so judiciously distributed, that the benefit imparted through them might be extended to various parts of the island. From the disposition of the people, and the want to which they were reduced, it could not but be regretted, that a larger number had not been dispatched before the commencement of hostilities; yet it was matter of consolation to be assured, on the authority before quoted, that from the prudent disposition of the supply already furnished, every poor family, attached to the divine word, in the vicinity of the places where the distribution was made, would be able to get

possession of a copy. What feeling mind, when reflecting on this most seasonable provision for a pious, but indigent, and almost forgotten portion of the Christian community, will not sympathize with the Fühnen Society in the following devout and benevolent prayer? "May our blessed Lord grant that this distribution of the divine word may be salutary to many, and that multitudes may be guided by this divine light, to life eternal!"

The acceptance with which the Testament was greeted by the inhabitants of Iceland, suggested the importance of taking a further step on behalf of these interesting people, and gratifying their eager desire for the word of God, by giving them the whole Bible. With this view, the sum of 300*l.* was appropriated to the purpose of printing the Old Testament, and steps were taking to prepare the requisite materials, when it became necessary for Mr. Paterson, on whom the superintendance of the work devolved, to quit his post of labor in the Danish capital, and seek a temporary asylum in some friendly or neutral territory. The removal, however, of Mr. Paterson did not take place, till he had put matters into as good a train at Copenhagen, as circumstances would allow; and it will hereafter appear, that to this change of place, dictated by a seemingly harsh necessity, may be traced the origin of those measures, which, cherished by the respective countries in which they were proposed, have terminated in

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the establishment of active, useful, and flourishing Bible Societies in the north, and north-eastern sovereignties of Europe.

While these proceedings were going on, and the wants of foreign nations were receiving their due measure of attention, no less diligence was employed in diffusing, or in preparing to diffuse, the benefits of the Institution among the inhabitants of the British dominions. Already the mountains of Wales had been partially illumined with the heavenly light; and the time was drawing near when the rocks of Scotland should be visited with the benefit of a similar illumination.

The course pursued in providing an impression of the Gaelic Bible, for the Scotch Highlanders, has been particularly described. The work was now considerably advanced, and in the prospect of its approaching completion, a printed circular, signed by the President, was, in the Summer of 1807, dispatched to the parochial ministers generally, throughout the Highlands, announcing the edition as expected to be ready for delivery by the end of the ensuing October, and offering it for sale to subscribers, at 3*s.* 3*d.* for the Bible, and 10*d.* for the Testament; and on the same advantageous terms to ministers, whether they were subscribers or not.

The information of a Bible printed in their vernacular dialect, from a copy accredited by the first authorities in their church, and tendered to

them at a price considerably below the standard at which they had been accustomed to procure it, whenever they were able to procure it at all, was an article of very acceptable intelligence to the inhabitants of the Highlands, and excited the liveliest emotions of joy and gratitude, both in ministers and people. The former proclaimed from their pulpits the agreeable tidings, and the latter emulated the zeal of their pastors, by eagerly subscribing for copies, according to their respective wants and means of pecuniary contribution.

Numerous letters were received, in consequence of the circular notice, and the measures adopted to give it publicity, all which corroborated what had been reported and believed, with regard to the scarcity of Gaelic Bibles, and the great anxiety of the Highlanders to possess them.

"I gladly embraced" (says one correspondent*) "the earliest opportunity of acquainting my people with the important contents; and they have, with heartfelt gratitude to the worthy Society, and I trust with unfeigned thanks to the God of all grace, subscribed, &c." "I do not suppose" (adds this correspondent) "that, among 4,000 souls under my pastoral care, there were a dozen Gaelic Bibles." "I request," (says another correspondent †) "if possible, that the honorable Society

* Rev. James Macintosh, Mansefield, Isle of Islay.

† Rev. John Mac Keith, Southend in Campbeltown, Argyleshire.

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will not disappoint us of any of the number subscribed for: as all the people are most anxious to get the books; and exceedingly grateful for the kind dispensation of Providence towards them, in affording them, at last, an opportunity of providing themselves with the Holy Scriptures in their native mother-language—a thing long wished for over all the Highlands of Scotland."

"Many of the poor Highlanders of Glasgow," (writes a third *) "upon hearing of the cheapness of the Scriptures in our native language, expressed their heartfelt gratitude with tears of joy in their eyes, considering, that hitherto they could not be purchased under 25*s.* sterling at least."

The consequence of a feeling at once so warm and so generally diffused, was, a speedy application for nearly half the entire impression; and both the Bibles and Testaments, when delivered from the press, obtained a rapid and extensive circulation.

Such was the event of this effort to furnish a cheap and abundant supply of the Gaelic Scriptures. Few undertakings in which the British and Foreign Bible Society have embarked with a view to benefit their British fellow-subjects, have been attended throughout, and recompensed at last, with more pure and unclouded satisfaction. The interesting nature of the service, the liberal

* Rev. John Maclaurin, Gaelic Chapel, Glasgow.

co-operation of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, and the warm and overflowing gratitude of the ingenuous receivers themselves, made the task of the Society a source of unqualified pleasure, and ultimately ensured to their labors and their cares a full and an honorable reward. Though much has already been cited from the documents transmitted by the Highland ministers, the author cannot forbear adding another extract to the number; and with that will conclude his account of the subject.

"The Bible Society's letter, offering a supply of Gaelic copies of the Sacred Scriptures, I have had the great satisfaction of receiving. I have endeavored to impress the minds of my people with a just sense of the benevolence of the Society, and of the inestimable benefit of having the Scriptures, it may be said, without money and without price, in their native tongue; and I have the pleasure to offer the Society their warmest thanks for the truly Christian donation intended for them. While war is spreading desolation and misery over the face of the earth, and unrelenting ambition wades through blood and carnage to attain its object; let charity, which rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, apply the balm of consolation, hold up to human folly and wickedness the mirror of truth, and, through the medium of the Scriptures, convince the world that godliness has the promise of this

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life, and of that which is to come. Does history stain her page with the sanguinary achievements of the enemies of mankind, and will she forget to record the name of that wise and benevolent Christian, who projected the plan of the Bible Society, and contributed his labor of love towards promoting its excellent design? While the voice of prophecy is silent, and the power of miracles has ceased among men, let the amiable exertions of charity attract the attention, and excite the admiration of the world. And let this prove an æra in which truth shall prevail over error, and in which the Holy Oracles of God shall carry light and saving health into these remote and far extended regions which have been long under the power of darkness and the delusion of error."

Amidst these operations, in which, regardless of every thing but the simple prosecution of its object, the Society continued to evince extraordinary diligence and growing activity, exertions were not wanting on the part of its friends to obtain for it an increase of that patronage which might augment its influence, and thereby enlarge its means of doing good. Foremost in the rank of these zealous benefactors, was the venerable Bishop Porteus. By his Lordship's desire, the author drew up an Abstract of the Society's Constitution and Proceedings; printed copies of which the Bishop distributed through many respectable channels.

But the reader will form a still better idea of the Bishop's vigilance, and anxiety to acquire for the Institution the esteem it deserved, from his Lordship's conduct on a great public occasion.

On the anniversary of the King's birth-day, it is customary for the Archbishops and Bishops, or of so many of them as may happen to be in the metropolis and its vicinity, to be entertained at the palace of the Bishop of London. In the contemplation of this festival, (which was to take place on the 4th of June, 1806,) the Bishop desired to be furnished with copies of the Third Report, that he might have an opportunity of recommending the Society to his Episcopal Brethren, particularly to those who were on the Irish Bench. His Lordship's request was duly complied with; and to copies of the Report were added some specimens of Oriental Translations, and Abstracts of the Society's Proceedings. The following extract from a note written the day after the meeting of the Prelates, will show how attentively the Bishop had studied to improve this opportunity to the Society's advantage.

"I return your specimens with many thanks, and am obliged to you for the other pamphlets; which I shall endeavour to dispose of properly. I gave copies of the *complete* Reports to the four Irish Bishops, and recommended them strongly to their notice. Your short statement of facts will be very useful."

Shortly after this period, the declining health of the Bishop having induced the Faculty to prescribe a removal to Clifton, his Lordship, while residing there as a valetudinarian, found an agreeable employment for the energies of his active and benevolent mind, in distributing papers recommendatory of the Society, and in doing his utmost to introduce it to the favor and the patronage of his friends of every condition.

Among the communications transmitted by the Bishop while sequestered at Clifton, was a printed paper, entitled, "Literary Intelligence from India." This intelligence respected the journey of the late Rev. Dr. Buchanan from Calcutta to Travancore, and those interesting discoveries respecting the Syrian Christians which were afterwards incorporated by the Doctor himself with other accounts, and published under the general title, of "Christian Researches in India."

To the information contained in this printed paper the Bishop attached considerable importance; and the reader who reflects upon the Bishop's anxiety to have the Scriptures translated and circulated in India, will not be surprised at his Lordship's zealous distribution of a sheet, in which, among other interesting articles, the following information was contained.

"It ought to be mentioned to the praise of the present Bishop of the Romish church on the coast of Malabar, that he has consented to

the circulation of the Scriptures throughout his diocese. The Malayalim Translation acquires from this circumstance an increased importance; since there will be now upwards of 200,000 Christians in Malayala, who are ready to receive it. The translation of the New Testament (which it is proposed to print first) has already commenced, under the superintendance of the Syrian Bishop. The true cause of the low state of religion among the Romish churches on the sea coast, and in Ceylon, is, their want of the Bible. It is doubtful whether some of the priests know that such a book exists. It is injurious to Christianity in India, to call men Christians, who know not the Scriptures of their religion; they might as well be called by any other name. Oral instruction they have none, even from their European priests. The best effects may, therefore, be expected from the simple means of putting the Bible into their hands. All who are well acquainted with the natives know, that instruction by *books* is best suited to them. They are in general a contemplative people, and patient in their inquiries; anxious also to know what it can be, that is of importance enough to be *written;* at the same time that they regard written precepts with respect. If they possess a book in a language which they understand, it will not be left long unread. In Tanjore, and other places where the Bible is freely given, the Protestant religion flourishes; and produces the happiest effects on

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the character of the people. In Tanjore, the Christian virtues will be found in exercise by the feeble-minded Hindoo, in a vigor and purity which will surprise those who have never known the native character, but under the greatest disadvantages. On the Sunday, the people, habited in their best apparel, repair to the parish church, when the solemnity of their devotion in accompanying the public prayers, is truly impressive. They sing the old psalm tunes well; and the voice of the full congregation may be heard at a distance. Prayers being ended, they listen to the sermon, evidently, with deep attention; nor have they any difficulty in understanding it, for they almost all, both men and women, can read their Bible. Many of them take down the discourse on *ollas*, that they may read it afterwards to their families at home*. As soon as the minister has pronounced his text, the sound of the *iron style* on the palm-leaf, is heard throughout the congregation. Even the boys of the schools have their *ollas* in their hands, and may be seen, after divine service, reading them to their mothers, as they pass over their fields homewards. This aptitude of the people to receive and record the words of the preacher, renders it peculiarly necessary that 'the priests' lips should keep

* It is well known that natives of Tanjore, and Travancore, can write down what is spoken deliberately, without losing one word. They seldom look at their *ollas* while writing; and can write in the dark with fluency.

knowledge.' Upon the whole, the moral conduct, upright dealing, decorous manners, and decent dress, of the native Protestants of Tanjore, demonstrate the powerful influence and peculiar excellence of the Christian religion. It ought, however, to be observed, that the Bible, when the reading of it becomes general, has nearly the same effect on the poor of every place."

To these particulars it may be sufficient to add, that, during a period of several months, the Bishop's letters from Clifton, which were both frequent and animated, turned for the most part on his favorite topic, the British and Foreign Bible Society; and either recounted the efforts he had made to promote its interests, by conversation, or recommendatory publications; or suggested useful hints for the direction of its affairs, the extension of its operations, or the advancement of its success.

The author has dwelt longer on the personal exertions of Bishop Porteus in favor of the Society, than to some readers may perhaps appear expedient: but when it is considered, against how many difficulties the Society had to struggle during the few first years of its establishment, it seems but just to make known, how much it was indebted, under God, for its progress, to the fostering care, and persevering friendship, of a Prelate, whose other honors will suffer no dis-

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paragement by an association with those which he has derived from the patronage of an Institution for disseminating the Christian Scriptures through every part of the world.

Things were proceeding in this prosperous manner, when on a sudden the horizon of the Society was darkened, and a storm arose, which frowned defiance upon its Eastern labors, and seemed to portend the annihilation of its plans for disseminating the invaluable blessings of divine revelation through the regions of Hindoostan. Of this formidable trial, and the issue to which it was brought, the author will lay before the reader an authentic and circumstantial narration.

In the month of October, 1807, a pamphlet appeared, under the title of "A Letter to the Chairman of the East India Company, on the danger of interfering in the Religious Opinions of the Natives of India, and on the Views of the British and Foreign Bible Society, as directed to India." The letter was signed, "A Proprietor;" and was generally ascribed to Thomas Twining, Esq. a gentleman of great respectability, who had recently returned from Bengal. To a second edition of the letter, Mr. Twining affixed his name, with the designation of "Late Senior Merchant on the Bengal Establishment;" and added an advertisement, purporting, that, having been en-

couraged by many of his friends to proceed, he should bring the subject of his letter before the Court of Proprietors at their next quarterly meeting.

In order to put the reader in possession of the ground upon which the Society was attacked, and the extent of the danger with which it was threatened, it will be proper to extract a few passages from that portion of the letter which referred expressly to the views and conduct of the British and Foreign Bible Society, as directed to India.

"With infinite concern and alarm" (says Mr. Twining) "I have lately heard of proceedings which convey to my humble apprehension evidence of a strong disposition, in a quarter too, where, above all others, its existence is most to be dreaded, *to interfere in the religious opinions of the native inhabitants of India*."

"I must then, Sir, observe, that *my fears of attempts to disturb the religious systems of India*, have been especially excited by my hearing that a Society exists in this country, the *chief* object of which is the *universal* dissemination of the Christian faith; particularly among those nations of the East to whom we possess a safe facility of access, and whose minds and doctrines are known to be most obscured by the darkness of infidelity. Upon this topic, so delicate and solemn, I shall, for the present, make but one

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observation. I shall only observe, that if a Society, having such objects in view, does exist; and if the leading Members of that Society are also leading Members of the East India Company; and not only of the East India Company, but of the Court of Directors; nay, Sir, not only of the Court of Directors, but of the Board of Controul; if, I say, these alarming hypotheses are true; then, Sir, *are our possessions in the East already in a situation of most imminent and unprecedented peril; and no less a danger than the threatened extermination of our Eastern Sovereignty, commands us to step forth, and arrest the progress of such rash and unwarrantable proceedings.*"

The writer then states "the principal grounds of his suspicion and anxiety," by exhibiting a series of "Extracts from the REPORTS, and from letters therein contained of the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society," and also from "Dr. Buchanan's Memoir," referred to in the Society's Report. It is proper to observe, that these Extracts are exhibited in a detached and insulated form: and they conclude with the following passage from Dr. Buchanan's Memoir.

"No Christian nation ever possessed such an extensive field for the propagation of the Christian faith, as that afforded to us by our influence over the hundred million natives of

Hindoostan. No other nation ever possessed such facilities for the extension of its faith, as we now have in the government of a passive people, who yield submissively to our mild sway, reverence our principles, and acknowledge our dominion to be a blessing. Why should it be thought incredible that Providence hath been pleased, in a course of years, to subjugate this Eastern empire to the most civilized nation in the world, for this very purpose?

"The progressive civilization of the Hindoos will never injure the interests of the East India Company. But shall a Christian people, acknowledging a Providence in the rise and fall of empires, regulate the feeling of future times, and neglect a present duty; a solemn and imperious duty; exacted by their religion, by their public principles, and by the opinions of the Christian nations around them! Or can it be gratifying to the English nation to reflect, that they receive the riches of the East on the terms of chartering immoral superstition!

"No truth has been more clearly demonstrated than this, that the communication of Christian instruction to the natives of India, is easy; and that the benefits of that instruction, civil as well as moral, will be inestimable. Whether we consider the happiness diffused among so many millions, or their consequent attachment to

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our government, or the advantages resulting from the introduction of the civilized arts. Every thing that can brighten the hope, or animate the feeling of a virtuous people, organizing a new empire, and seeking the most rational means, under the favor of heaven, to insure its perpetuity; every consideration we aver, would persuade us TO DIFFUSE THE BLESSINGS OF CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE AMONG OUR INDIAN SUBJECTS."

"Having placed" (says Mr. Twining) "the foregoing circumstances—the grounds, as they appear to me, of seasonable suspicion, and just alarm—before you, Sir, the Chairman of the East India Company, I have, I believe, done all that a mere proprietor of stock has it in his power to do. With you, Sir, and the Gentlemen who are appointed, with you, to watch over and direct the affairs of the Company, rests the power of further inquiry into these serious matters, and the application of such measures as the issue of further inquiry may appear to demand.

"From a very early period of my life, my time has been spent among the natives of India; and I believe, I may say, it has in some degree been spent in promoting their happiness. I have been in various situations *with* them, and *over* them, from the Presidency of Fort William to the most distant parts of Hindoostan: and *this intercourse has led to an attachment, which*

will not permit me to remain a silent spectator of attempts to disturb their dearest rights and wound their tenderest feelings. I should, indeed, feel myself entitled to the reproach of numerous and most respectable inhabitants of India, my personal acquaintances and friends, if I could forget or forsake them on such an occasion."

Mr. Twining's conclusion is in the following words:

"As long as we continue to govern India in the mild and tolerant spirit of Christianity, we may govern it with ease: but *if ever the fatal day shall arrive, when religious innovation shall set her foot in that country, indignation will spread from one end of Hindoostan to the other; and the arms of fifty millions of people will drive us from that portion of the globe, with as much ease as the sand of the desert is scattered by the wind.* But I still hope, Sir, that a perseverance in the indiscreet measures I have described, will not be allowed to expose our countrymen in India to the horrors of that dreadful day: but *that our native subjects in every part of the East, will be permitted to follow their own religious opinions, their own religious prejudices and absurdities, until it shall please the Omnipotent power of* HEAVEN *to lead them into the paths of* LIGHT *and* TRUTH."

The changes which have taken place since the date of this publication, both in the religious

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state of India, and in the opinion entertained about the propagation of Christianity in the East, give to much of what has been cited from Mr. Twining's pages the air of irony and satire, rather than of grave complaint and serious expostulation. The reader may, however, be assured, that the writer was sincere in the expression of his alarm, and of his determination to use his utmost efforts to arrest the progress of that Institution by which it had been occasioned.

Scarcely had this pamphlet met the public eye, when a sensation was excited by its perusal, which promised to assist the designs of its author; and to strengthen that party on which he relied for bringing about a peremptory interdiction of the Society's operations within the limits of British India. Many causes contributed to the production of this impression, in favor of Mr. Twining's appeal. Among them may be enumerated, the topics of alarm, so gravely and plausibly exhibited; the character of the author, his long residence in India, and recent return from that country; and above all, an extreme ignorance and misconception of the subject, united with a slavish attachment to worldly policy, and a morbid apprehension of every thing which was represented as likely to disturb the security of our Asiatic possessions.

It will naturally be concluded, that so serious an attack, conducted by a leader of such

authority and influence, and supported by allies who seemed to consider their interest, their honor, and almost their very existence, to depend upon its success, would neither escape the observation of the Officers of the Society, nor be regarded by them with inactivity or unconcern. The Noble President, ever watchful to discern the approach of danger, and prompt to devise the means of repelling it, among other steps which he judged it expedient to take, suggested to the author the propriety of giving the hostile letter a serious examination. In consequence of this suggestion, strengthened by the observation of the unfavorable effect produced by Mr. Twining's letter on the public mind, the author, though not a little embarrassed by his numerous avocations, both domestic and parochial, determined to prepare a reply.

This reply, which was published early in December, under the title of "An Address to the Chairman of the East India Company, occasioned by Mr. Twining's Letter to that Gentleman, &c." confined itself strictly to the defence of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and chose the narrowest ground on which it appeared to admit of being defended. The "Address" undertook to prove, that, neither in the *object*, the *patronage*, nor the *proceedings* of the Society, was there any thing to justify the charge of culpable interference with the religious systems of

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India, or to authorize the apprehension of those alarming consequences to our sovereignty in the East, which had been so confidently predicted."

It is denied in "the Address," that the *object* of the Society is correctly defined, when that object is stated to be "the dissemination of the Christian faith." On this part of the defence, the following remarks, as showing the distinct and insulated character of the Institution, may be not wholly unworthy of the reader's attention.

"Whatever may be the *end* which the Society contemplates, that only can be considered as its *object*, towards which its means are directed, and in which they all converge and terminate. That central, that ultimate point, in the case of the Society under consideration, is, as we have seen, Sir,—not 'the Dissemination of the Christian Faith,'—but THE CIRCULATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.' In this respect, the Society possesses a characteristic feature, which discriminates it from every voluntary association on an extensive scale for religious purposes now in existence, and brings the question of its merits or demerits within very narrow and convenient bounds.

"There exists, Sir, in this country, as you very well know, a most venerable and useful Institution, 'The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.' This Society may be accurately enough represented within the limits prescribed by its charter, (and happy should I be to see

British India within those limits,*) as having for its *object*, the *Dissemination of the Christian Faith*. The latitude of its designation, and the generality with which its object is expressed, allow to this Society an unlimited choice of means. It may define, and systematize, and classify, the several points of Christian Theology: it may issue Tracts on all and any matters of doctrine and discipline, at its discretion: it may employ Missionaries and Catechists, erect Churches and Schools, and proceed *ad libitum*, for the accomplishment of its purposes. And why?—For the reason above given: because its designation is *general* and its object *undefined*. Not so the British and Foreign Bible Society. It can do but *one* act for the propagation of Christianity; it can distribute but *one* Book; and that Book—the BIBLE. It can support no Missionaries, erect no Churches, endow no Schools, disseminate no Tracts; it cannot issue even a Dissertation to recommend the Bible, nor annex a single Note to

* This wish is now likely to be accomplished. The great object so early, zealously, and perseveringly recommended by the late Dr. Buchanan, that of establishing Episcopacy in India, having been attained, the venerable Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge granted to the Bishop of Calcutta, when proceeding to his station, "a vote of credit, to the extent of 1000*l.* to enable his Lordship to promote the objects of the Society in India, in such a way as he should deem most consonant to the Society's designs."

Report of Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, for 1814.

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explain it. Its designation and its object confine it to the circulation of the Scriptures: it can do nothing out of these limits; it can do nothing beyond them.

"Such being the case, I am really at a loss to imagine, on what grounds of even remote plausibility, any man can have reasoned himself into a belief, that a Society, whose line of operation is so precisely defined, whose measures of proceeding are drawn from vague and indefinite generalities to one sole, exclusive, and cognizable object, can be chargeable with the design of culpable interference in the religious opinions of those, to whose voluntary improvement its services are devoted.

"Does the *translation* of the Scriptures into the native languages of India imply such culpable interference? Putting out of the question in what degree literature, and arts, and polity, are concerned to cultivate those ancient and venerable languages; it cannot, I think, admit of a question, that we are bound, both in justice and gratitude, to impart to those nations over which Providence has given us a beneficial dominion, some portion at least of the light we enjoy, through the only channels by which they can receive it. Besides, if we derive into our own language the spurious morality of India,* it is but just that we should

* See the Code of Gentoo Laws, translated into English by Mr. Halhed.

pour back into theirs the genuine morality of Christendom. If we acquaint ourselves, through the medium of translation, with their mythological absurdities and amatory trifles, it is but fair that we should afford them an opportunity of becoming acquainted, through the same innocent medium, with the august mysteries of human redemption, and the solid realities of the Gospel. There is, at all events, nothing rude, or offensive, or unjust, in such a commerce. It is, to say the least, giving gold for brass. Heathens have, certainly, no reason to complain of the exchange.

"But if the translation of the Scriptures be innocent, the *circulation* of them may possibly be construed into an act of aggression upon the systems of India. I cannot pretend to say what answer a Brahmin might give, if consulted, whether the Sooder might receive a copy of that Shaster in which God is represented to be no *respecter of persons*. But, whatever way his answer might incline, it would, in my judgment, determine nothing. The Scriptures, as a revelation from heaven, have at least as good a claim to a free circulation, in whatever language they may happen to appear, as any treatises upon law, or morals, or polite literature. For the mode of distribution the Society makes no specific provision. That must depend upon local wants and facilities; and will be naturally regulated, and restrained, so far as restraint may be necessary, by the laws

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and usages of the several countries in which distribution is made. Persons in a situation to know the necessities and disposition of the people, will, it is presumed, either sell them as an article of commerce to purchasers, or gratuitously bestow them as a dole of charity upon petitioners. There is no room for apprehending that they will be forced upon any. They are messengers that speak not to the ear, but to the eye: they are oracles that remain silent, till they are consulted. In short, as they can do no one good who is not willing to search them, it is utterly impossible that they should be forced upon any one who is unwilling to receive them.

"Since therefore the object of the Society is not, as has been stated, "The dissemination of the Christian Faith," but the *circulation of the Holy Scriptures;* an object, simple and determinate; and, at the same time, beneficial and inoffensive; —it follows, that the views of the Society, so far as their OBJECT is concerned, are not of a description to justify the charge of *interference;* nor, consequently, to occasion in the Governors of India, either at home or abroad, any reasonable ground of alarm."

The Patronage—against which so much is insinuated, as containing the names of "Mr. Thornton, the Director; Mr. Grant, the Deputy Chairman; and Lord Teignmouth, (late Governor General of India, and now a Member of the Board of Controul,)"—is shewn to be in no *peculiar*

sense East Indian; and to contain within it, so far as it is such, nothing that could authorize the remotest suspicion of a design "to disturb" (by violent interference) "the religious systems of India."

The *Proceedings* of the Society were contended to have displayed, by the adversary's own showing, an undeflecting adherence to the fundamental principle of its constitution, and the professed object of all its operations—the circulation of the Holy Scriptures.

On these general grounds of defence, the Chairman is appealed to in the following terms:

"Let me now, Sir, be allowed to make my appeal to you, whether there be any thing in the Object, the Patronage, or the Proceedings, of the Society against which judgment is demanded, that can be construed into matter of offence to the native inhabitants of India. Could any object have been selected with more judgment? Any Patronage have been employed with more mildness? Any Proceedings have been conducted with more correctness? Has Mr. Twining showed, is he prepared to show, that the Society has aimed at any object but that which it professes; that the Patronage which it enjoys has been used for any purposes of intimidation or officious interference; that, in any one instance, it has been guilty of even an accidental aberration from the

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line of its profession? What then has Mr. Twining proved? I repeat, Sir, with confidence, what I have before declared, — He has proved NOTHING."

As the conclusion glances at topics, which, though they did not come necessarily within the line of defence, were too important to be wholly overlooked, the author trusts he shall be excused for giving it insertion.

"And now, Sir, having done what I conceived to be my duty, I have only to apologize to you for the length of this address. I might have saved much both of your time and my own, if I could have prevailed upon myself to throw the burden of proof, where in truth it ought to rest, on the shoulders of the accuser. I might have reasonably demurred to his gratuitous charges, and claimed an acquittal for the Society, from the defect of evidence to convict it; but I wished to see it put fairly upon its trial: convinced that it would appear, upon a strict investigation, not merely innocent, but laudable; not only undeserving of blame, but entitled to commendation and support.

"But while I have entered into detail where detail appeared necessary, I have scrupulously avoided it wherever it could be spared. With this view, Sir, I have not justified the Society for adopting it as their opinion, that Christ will

" bring *from all nations and religions, languages and kingdoms** of this world, some, as trophies of his triumph on the cross:" because I supposed, that they who know the Scriptures, never doubted this position; and they who do not, would never be persuaded to believe it. In like manner, I have not apologized for the Society's calling Mahomedanism " a bloody and degrading superstition," because I did not conceive it deserved a better character; nor for its anticipating " the downfall" of that system of imposture, because I considered such an event to be a consummation which Christians of every description both expected and desired. For similar reasons, Sir, I have declined affirmatively proving, whatever did not seem absolutely to require it. I have not proved that it is the duty of the British Government, and therefore of the East India Company, to encourage Christianity among their Eastern subjects; because I thought a community of religion (so far as it could be effected) between the governors and governed, was recognized as a principle both of justice and of policy by all the states of Christendom: and because I found in Mr. Twining's letter nothing which tended to

* This passage (extracted from the Letter of a Roman Catholic Priest in Swabia, to the Secretary of the Society) is *italicised* by Mr. Twining, which is his typographical way of displaying the grounds of his " suspicion and anxiety."

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prove the contrary.* I have not shown that the diffusion of Christianity among our Eastern fellow-subjects is *desirable*, because I thought such a position was distinctly comprehended in Mr. Twining's own admission†; nor have I argued that it is *practicable*, because, if the opposite opinions of Dr. Buchanan and Mr. Twining be considered as destroying one another, there still remains the recent, decided, and official testimony of Dr. Ker‡ in favor of such a conclusion.

"I have not pointed out the comparative indifference, upon Mr. Twining's principles, between one religion and another, to the welfare of a people; nor the impossibility, on those principles, of India being christianized by any human means, so long

* The Portuguese, the Spaniards, and the French, have propagated the Romish faith in all their foreign settlements; and the Danes have not been indifferent to the promotion of the Protestant faith in theirs. How have the English acted in this respect?

† "Whose minds and doctrines are known to be obscured by the darkness of infidelity." *Letter*, p. 4.

‡ Dr. Ker, one of the Company's Chaplains at Madras, in a Report made to the Governor and Council, *by their Order*, speaks to this point as follows:

"Pure Christianity is far from being a religion for which the highest cast of Hindoos have any disrespect," and again, "I do not mention this as an experiment, the result of which might be considered as problematical; the experiment has been already made, and the consequences have proved commensurate with the highest expectation which reasonable men could entertain."

as it shall remain under the dominion of the Company; nor the alternative to which Providence is by consequence reduced, of either giving up that country to everlasting superstition, or of working some miracle* in order to accomplish its conversion;—because I considered such inferences as too obvious to be overlooked, and too shocking to be endured. Finally, Sir, I have ventured to take for granted, considering who would be my judges, and in what an awful crisis I write, that the Bible is the only book which contains the revealed will of God; that the sooner it supersedes the Shaster and the Koran, the sooner will the happiness of India be consummated; and that the more we contribute, as a nation and as individuals, to promote this end by lawful means,—the greater blessings we shall draw down upon our commerce and our arms, upon ourselves and our posterity."

To this defence were appended the following letters, addressed by His Majesty, George the First, to the Danish Missionaries at Tranquebar: documents which reflect the greatest honor on the character of their royal author, and must endear his memory to every friend to the propagation of Christianity in the East.

* "I shall hope, Sir, that our native subjects in every part of the East will be permitted quietly to follow their own religious prejudices and absurdities, until it shall please the Omnipotent Power of HEAVEN to lead them into the paths of LIGHT and TRUTH." LETTER, p. 31.

LETTER I. Dated 1717.

" GEORGE, by the Grace of God, King, &c.

" REVEREND AND BELOVED,

" Your letters, dated the 20th of January of the present year, were most welcome to us; not only because the work undertaken by you, of converting the heathen to the Christian faith, doth, by the grace of God, prosper, but also because that *in this, our kingdom, such a laudable zeal for the promotion of the Gospel prevails.*

" We pray you may be endued with health and strength of body, that you may long continue to fulfil your ministry with good success; of which, as we shall be rejoiced to hear, so you will always find us ready to succour you, in whatever may tend to promote your work, and to excite your zeal. We assure you of the continuance of our royal favour.

" GEORGE, R.

" HATTORF."

LETTER II. Dated 1727.

" REVEREND AND BELOVED,

" From your letters, dated Tranquebar, the 12th of September, 1725, which some time since

came to hand, we received much pleasure; since by them we are informed, not only of your zealous exertions in the prosecution of the work committed to you, but also of the happy success which hath hitherto attended it, and which hath been graciously given of God.

" We return you thanks for these accounts, and it will be acceptable to us, if you continue to communicate whatever shall occur in the progress of your mission.

" In the mean time, we pray you may enjoy strength of body and mind for the long continuance of your labours in this good work, to the glory of God, and the promotion of Christianity among the heathen, *that its perpetuity may not fail in generations to come.*

" GEORGE, R."

Among the writers who appeared on the side of Mr. Twining, the most distinguished for zeal, activity, and influence, was Major Scott Waring. Of this Gentleman, whose friendship the author has experienced, subsequently to the controversy in which they were mutually engaged, he desires to speak with becoming respect. The cause of truth requires some sacrifice of personal feeling: but the author hopes, in this, and every similar case, to do justice to the claims of the one, without forgetting what is due to those of the other.

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The publication in which Major Scott Waring delivered his sentiments, was a pamphlet of considerable bulk, entitled, "Observations on the Present State of the East India Company, &c.;" and the remarks directed against the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the propagation of Christianity in India, were contained in a preface of nearly seventy pages. The pamphlet was anonymous; but Major Scott Waring having in the course of the controversy acknowledged himself to be the author of it, there can be neither error nor impropriety in speaking of it as his production.

It would be trifling with the reader to lay before him the charges and forebodings accumulated in this publication: they were of the same family with those which have been already referred to in considering the letter of Mr. Twining. With him, this writer, viewing the British and Foreign Bible Society through the medium of confused information and political alarm, saw in its tendency nothing but danger to the British empire in India; and prognosticated, as the direct and inevitable result of its operations in that quarter, the almost immediate and utter downfall of our sovereignty in the East.

Thus far the two writers were agreed: but while the former contented himself with recommending an authoritative interference in general terms, the latter went considerably farther, and

prescribed both the way and the extent in which that interference should be exercised. The author of the "Observations" "humbly submitted a plan" for arresting the evil, "to the consideration of His Majesty's Ministers, the East India Company, and the Legislature:" and the substance of that plan was contained in the following explicit and sweeping proposition.

"The most, and indeed the only efficacious measures, are the immediate recal of every English Missionary, and a prohibition to all persons dependent on the Company, from giving assistance to the translation or circulation of our Holy Scriptures."

The crisis in which this publication made its appearance, and the countenance which it gave to the letter of Mr. Twining,* added not a little to the apprehensions entertained by the friends to Christianity and to the circulation of the Scriptures in the East; and stimulated them to provide more vigorous and effective measures of counteraction and defence.

The subject of Missions was ably taken up by the late Rev. Andrew Fuller, who canvassed particularly the charges brought by Major Scott Waring against the Baptist Missionaries in India; and justified both the principle of Missions, and

* I have just read the second edition of Mr. Twining's *most excellent Letter.*"

P. S. to Preface to Observations, &c.

the conduct of the parties impugned, in a very complete and satisfactory vindication. To so much of Major Scott Waring's Observations as applied to the British and Foreign Bible Society, a brief reply was furnished in a postscript to the third edition of "The Address to the Chairman," and issued in sufficient time to get into circulation before the day appointed by Mr. Twining for bringing his motion under the consideration of the Court. The postscript (which from the pressure of the occasion was written and printed within a few hours) animadverted cursorily on the groundless charges with which the Society had been assailed; pointed out the injustice, severity, and impolicy of the proposed interdiction of it; and concluded with the following appeal:

"Will there then, Sir, be found a man bold enough to propose to your assembly a measure so repugnant to justice and to policy; a measure exemplifying with such fatal severity that coercion against which the parties who recommend it, so loudly and insidiously exclaim; a measure which may brand our Government with impiety, and seal up our Indian subjects under everlasting superstition and imposture:—if there should, will there be found a majority in your assembly to sanction such a measure? I trust there will be found neither the one nor the other. The eyes of Christians will be fixed upon your en-

suing deliberations, and much will be inferred to our prejudice or advantage in this eventful crisis, from the conclusions at which you arrive. We are engaged in a doubtful conflict, and our human resources are few and low. I hope we shall not make our little less, by disunion in matters of eternal moment; nor aggravate the dangers of our warfare, BY MAKING GOD OUR ENEMY."

On the 23d of December, the Court of Proprietors met at the India House; but the subject having excited extraordinary attention among religious persons of different persuasions, Mr. Twining found so little encouragement to expect a favorable issue to his motion, that he declined proposing it; and the Court accordingly adjourned.*

* The following is the account given of the Meeting, and its event, as it appeared in the Christian Observer for December, 1807.

"At the Court of Proprietors of the East India Company, held on the 23d instant, Mr. Thomas Twining, the author of a pamphlet reviewed in our present number, rose to say, that, being aware of the disadvantages which would attend the public agitation of the question discussed in that pamphlet, relative to the attempts now making to propagate Christianity in Hindoostan, he should be willing to withdraw the notice he had given of a motion upon it, provided he received satisfactory assurances from the Chairman, that the attention of the Directors had been turned to the subject, and that it was their purpose to prevent the evils which would necessarily be produced by an interference with the religious prejudices of the natives. The Chairman stated, that the subject had certainly occupied the attention of the Board of Directors.

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Thus terminated this formidable attempt to exclude the Society from the whole of British India, and to extinguish, in its very dawn, that light which has since diffused its rays over so large a portion of the East; and which appears designed by its Heavenly Author to shine more and more unto the perfect day.

It is due to Major Scott Waring to say, that, upon becoming better acquainted with the plan and proceedings of the British and Foreign Bible Society, his sentiments respecting its operations in India experienced a considerable change; and there is reason for presuming, that a similar effect from the same cause may have been produced in the minds of other gentlemen who had been led, by a misapprehension of its nature and its tendency, to give it their determined opposition. In fact, the obligation to propagate Christianity is so palpable, and the circulation of the Scriptures is so obviously adapted to accomplish

They were anxious to discharge their duty in this and every other respect, and the worthy member had no right to assume that they had neglected it in this particular instance. He trusted the Court would not withhold from the Directors on this occasion the confidence which they had been accustomed to repose in them. Mr. Prinsep was proceeding to express his dissatisfaction with this reply, when the Chairman stopped him, by observing, that there was no question before the Court: the question of adjournment was then put and carried."

that end, that nothing more seems required than time and reflection to render such a conviction universal.

Even those to whom other modes of propagating Christianity among the natives of India appear liable to objection, have, in many instances, expressed their concurrence in the dissemination of the Holy Scriptures to the widest extent. An example has just been produced in the case of Major Scott Waring. To this may be added another, in that of Warren Hastings, Esq. formerly Governor-General of Bengal; who, though differing from many whom he respects, and by whom he is equally respected, on the general question of Missions, is a pecuniary contributor, and a warm friend, to the British and Foreign Bible Society. With respect to the fitness and efficiency of the Scriptures as an instrument for enlightening India and the East, there seems room but for one opinion. "If" (to use the language of the late Rev. D. Brown) "you would give the Gentiles light, give them the word of God in their own language. When the word is once given, great will be the multitude of the preachers. Let them read, and they will begin to preach."

But it will now be proper to introduce two personages, who, at different stages of this controversy, took a decided part in repelling the attack both upon the circulation of the Scriptures, and the general propagation of Christianity, in

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India. These were the Bishop of London and Lord Teignmouth. Their pamphlets were anonymous; but worthy, in every respect, of the talents which produced them, and of the cause in support of which they were written.

Bishop Porteus's production, with the publication of which the author of this History was confidentially entrusted, appeared under the title of "A few Cursory Remarks on Mr. Twining's Letter to the Chairman of the East India Company, by a Member of the British and Foreign Bible Society;" and exhibited a happy specimen of lively, pertinent, and well-applied irony. The following passages will enable the reader to form some judgment of this spirited performance; the writer of which, it should be remembered, was at that time in his seventy-seventh year.

"Mr. Twining has struck out a very ingenious way of becoming an author. It is by transcribing from the publication of those whom he attacks, one half of what they have written, and tacking to it two or three pages of his own *truly original* remarks. This, it must be owned, is a very easy and compendious method of making a book. I congratulate him on the discovery, and for one rejoice that he has adopted it. The large and copious extracts he has made from the Reports of the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and Dr. Buchanan's invaluable Memoir on an Ecclesiastical Establish-

ment in India, are highly gratifying to me. As a Member of that most respectable and truly Christian Society, I return Mr. Twining my most cordial thanks, for thus producing the records of their proceedings to the world. His intention, evidently, was to excite the indignation of the public against that Society, for daring to commit the unpardonable crime (for that is their sole offence) of sending 2000*l.* to India, to assist the great work going on there, of translating the Scriptures into the various languages of that vast country. But I am inclined to think that he will be disappointed in his aim, and that the indignation he meant to excite, will recoil upon himself. The truth is, that the extracts he has made from the Society's Reports, do them infinite honor. They show that they have but one great object in view, *the circulation of the Scriptures in foreign languages and foreign countries;* that they have adhered invariably to this main purpose of their Institution; and that they have pursued it with a degree of activity, vigour, indefatigable perseverance, and proportionable success, of which there are few, if any instances to be found.

" Mr. Twining speaks with so much feeling and so much tenderness of the *dearest rights and privileges of the Hindoos*, and is so extremely anxious that they should not be disturbed in the enjoyment of them, but should be permitted

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quietly to follow their own religious prejudices, that the reader may possibly be a little curious to know, what these said rights and privileges, and religious opinions and prejudices, are, for which Mr. Twining entertains so strong a predilection, and so earnest a desire to preserve them inviolate, for the comfort and happiness of the poor natives of India.

" I will therefore recite a few of them as stated in Dr. Buchanan's Memoir; but my nerves will not suffer me to *cut open the leaves*,* to transcribe the whole.

" It is then, (as Dr. Buchanan, who has resided many years at Calcutta, and travelled over a large part of India, informs us,) *one of the religious opinions and religious prejudices of the Hindoos*, that it is their duty to shew their reverence for their gods by immolating human victims on the banks of the Ganges; by drowning them in that river, or exposing them to be devoured by sharks; by hanging up female infants in baskets in the open air, and leaving them to starve; by devoting themselves to death, by falling designedly under the wheels of the machines which carry their gods; and by encouraging widows to burn themselves on the funeral pile

* Mr. Twining, speaking of Dr. Buchanan's Memoir, says: " Here, Sir, my extracts from his work must terminate, for *I really cannot cut open the leaves* which contain the sequel of such sanguinary doctrine."

of their deceased husbands. This last most horrible custom is still so prevalent even in the most populous and civilized part of India, that, in the year 1803, the number of women thus sacrificed, *within* 30 *miles round Calcutta*, amounted to 275. The average number is about 20 *per* month; and the late learned Mr. William Chambers calculated, that the number of women who perish by a self-devotement in the northern provinces of Hindoostan, is not less than 10,000 *annually*.

"These are a few of the *religious opinions, prejudices, and absurdities*, (as Mr. Twining calls them,) which he cherishes with so much tenderness, and for the sake of which he wishes to interdict the introduction of Christianity or the Scriptures into India. He knows that such introduction would be a death-blow to these *rights and privileges* of the Hindoos, and therefore is exerting all his power to avert the *horrors of that dreadful day* when any such attempt shall be made.

"Mr. Twining seems to be possessed of a very amiable disposition, great sensibility of mind, and great tenderness of nerves; but these excellent qualities of his display themselves rather in a peculiar way. Of the chances of war, of any partial disaffection to our Government of a civil or political nature, he says he has no

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very serious dread. The usual objects of alarm in these tremendous times, the overwhelming power of France, the probable loss of our commerce, our total separation from the Continent, and the menaces of invasion;—all these seem to inspire him with no terror or apprehension. But when any mention is made of that shocking and unpardonable crime of *introducing Christianity, or even circulating the Scriptures*, over India, all his feelings are up in arms against so wicked a measure; his mind, he tells us, is *oppressed with dread and astonishment;* and he deprecates, in the most moving terms, the *horrors of that dreadful day*. Dreadful, however, as that day appears to Mr. Twining, it will, I trust, be viewed by a very large majority of India Proprietors in a very different light; as a day of joy and gladness and exultation; a day that will confer on the natives of India the greatest blessing that Heaven in its bounty ever conferred upon mankind.

"In a word, the question now to be discussed at the India House is one of the most important that ever came under consideration, either there, or even in the Legislature of this kingdom. It is nothing less than this; Whether fifty millions of people shall have the words of Eternal Life laid open to them, all the blessings and all the virtues of Christianity diffused

among them, and all the glories of Heaven brought within their reach, — or whether they shall be for ever doomed to drown themselves in the Ganges, to throw themselves to the sharks, or under the carriages of their gods, to hang their children up in baskets to be starved, and suffer 10,000 widows to be burnt to death every year. Whoever votes for Mr. Twining's question, votes for the continuance of those diabolical practices to the end of time, by interdicting *the only possible remedy there is for them;* and after giving *such* a vote, let him lay his head quietly down on his pillow at night if he can."

The publication of Lord Teignmouth, was entitled, " Considerations on the Practicability, Policy, and Obligation of communicating to the Natives of India the Knowledge of Christianity: with Observations on the Prefatory Remarks to a Pamphlet published by Major Scott Waring. By a late Resident in Bengal." Of this production it would be difficult to speak in terms proportioned to its merits, without incurring the suspicion of a design to write its panegyric. The unanswerable manner in which, both from argument and fact, it refuted the objections by which the measures of the Bible Society and the propagation of Christianity in India had been assailed, constituted its lowest praise. It was, in fact, a temperate and enlightened apology for

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Christian principles, as affording the only security for sound legislation and permanent obedience; and it united most happily the wisdom of the Statesman with the piety of the Christian. Had this pamphlet appeared in an earlier stage of the controversy, it would undoubtedly have superseded every other. But it did not come before the public, till the question had been agitated almost to satiety, and the professed objects of the opponents had been avowedly renounced.

The subject, however, as taken up by Lord Teignmouth, was more than temporary; and the "Considerations," suggested by his Lordship, were adapted to throw light upon the question, whenever it should again be brought into discussion. The recent agitation of it, both in the Parliament and the country, redeemed this pamphlet from the comparative oblivion into which it had fallen; and it seems impossible that it should ever be read in a spirit of candor, without imparting fresh conviction upon a subject of the deepest interest to the civil and religious welfare of mankind.

The following extract, which forms the conclusion of the pamphlet, will amply justify what has been said in its commendation.

"Happily, however, these are truths not to be found only in the writings of Prelates, or in the

speculations of the closet: we may appeal to the records of Parliament for the sense of one branch of the Legislature on this head. For when the East India Company's charter was last renewed, it was formally resolved, in a Committee of the whole house, "That it is the peculiar and bounden duty of the Legislature to promote, by all just and prudent means, the interests and happiness of the inhabitants of the British dominions in India; and that for these ends, such measures ought to be adopted as may gradually tend to their advancement in useful knowledge, and to their religious and moral improvement.

"The above resolution plainly declares, that it is our duty to endeavour to promote the happiness of our Eastern fellow-subjects; while it clearly implies, that, in acquitting ourselves of this obligation, it ought to be one of the primary objects of our care, to impart to them the blessings of our superior attainments in religion and morality. It would be strange indeed, if so enlightened an assembly as the House of Commons, could have entertained a different opinion. In what new school of morals are we to be taught, that the ordinary principles which enforce on us the duty of lessening to the utmost of our power the misery, and of promoting the happiness, of our fellow-creatures, do not com-

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prehend that branch of services which must be acknowledged by every considerate mind to be beyond all others effectual for remedying the one and increasing the other? Such an exception, if it exist at all, ought at least to be established by an undisputed authority. But we are not called upon at present to argue this question.

"In opposition to this resolution of the House of Commons, a most extraordinary proposition has been advanced, not only denying that it is the duty of the Government of the parent state to endeavour, by safe and prudent and gradual means, such as sound discretion would suggest, and experience warrant, to communicate to our East Indian Empire the blessings of our superior light and knowledge; but even maintaining that Government ought to interpose its authority, professedly and expressly for the purpose of obstructing and putting a stop to all such attempts, whether made by the missions of our venerable chartered Societies for the promotion of Christian knowledge, or by any others: and more particularly for preventing the circulation, or even translation, of the Holy Scriptures into the Oriental languages.

"Thus, while every other religion in India is left undisturbed; while the doctrines of the Koran are freely circulated, and those of the

Vedas and Shasters, left unmolested; the Government of a country, professing the Christian religion, is called upon to exert its power for barring out every scattered ray of that religious and moral light, which, through the endeavours of any charitable individuals among us, might otherwise shine upon the inhabitants of that benighted land. It goes, in effect, to annihilate all that has been done for more than a hundred years, by the exertions of Missionaries, and the circulation of the Scriptures; and to cast back into the darkness of paganism those who had emerged from it: for such must unavoidably be the consequences of banishing Missionaries from India, and prohibiting the circulation of the Scriptures among the natives.

"Professing, with my countrymen in general, my belief in the divine authority of the Scriptures, and in the doctrine of a superintending Providence, so explicitly inculcated, and so fully illustrated by innumerable examples in the word of God; and still more that the decline and fall of states are the judicial inflictions of a divine hand, the punishments of guilty nations; I see, with the deepest concern, recommended, for the first time, the adoption of a system of conduct, by which we should take idolatry, with all its guilt, under our special patronage, and endeavour to shut out all know-

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ledge of, I had almost said, all access to, the Almighty.

" I am far from meaning to impute to those who have recommended such measures, any views or motives which they do not profess, or which they have disavowed; but the recommendation itself is fairly chargeable with all the consequences which I have assigned to it, although they may not have been considered by the authors or supporters of it.

" But I think it my duty to make a solemn appeal to all who still retain the fear of God, and who admit that religion, and the course of conduct which it prescribes, are not to be banished from the affairs of nations, now when the political sky, so long overcast, has become more lowering and black than ever;—whether this is a period for augmenting the weight of our national sins and provocations, by an exclusive toleration of idolatry: a crime which, unless the Bible be a forgery, has actually drawn forth the heaviest denunciations of vengeance, and the most fearful inflictions of the divine displeasure.

" Anxious as I am that the natives of India should become Christians, from a regard for their temporal happiness, and eternal welfare, I know that this is not to be effected by violence, nor by undue influence: and although I con-

sider this country bound by the strongest obligations of duty and interest, (which will ever be found inseparable,) to afford them the means of moral and religious instruction, I have no wish to limit that toleration which has been hitherto observed with respect to their religion, laws, and customs. On the contrary, I hold a perseverance in the system of toleration, not only as just in itself, but as essentially necessary to facilitate the means used for their conversion; and those means should be conciliatory, under the guidance of prudence and discretion. But I should consider a prohibition of the translation and circulation of our Holy Scriptures, and the recal of the Missionaries, most fatal prognostics with respect to the permanency of the British dominion in India."

It deserves attention, that while the friends of the British and Foreign Bible Society in England, were thus exerting themselves to protect it against an edict of expulsion from British India, its friends in that country, harrassed by an equally vexatious opposition, were recurring to similar measures of remonstrance and defence. The discouragement and restraint to which the translation and distribution of the Scriptures had been subjected, after the removal of Marquis Wellesley from the Govern-

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ment of Bengal, were deservedly condemned both by Mr. Brown and Dr. Buchanan; and, upon Lord Minto's arrival, and assumption of the supreme authority, Dr. Buchanan addressed a memorial to his Lordship, founded on certain public acts of the Bengal Government, antecedent to the period of his Lordship's administration, which Dr. Buchanan "considered to be dishonorable and injurious to Christianity." Among these acts were distinctly specified,

First, "The withdrawing of the patronage of Government from the translation of the Holy Scriptures into the Oriental tongues:" second, "attempting to suppress the translation of the Scriptures entirely."

This Memorial is dated at Calcutta, November 7, 1807; and it evinces the temperate firmness of a man, who, knowing that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, is neither ashamed to profess, nor afraid to defend it.

Thus does it appear, that in Calcutta, and in London, were attempts simultaneously made to arrest the stream of divine truth, just as it was issuing from its hallowed source to fertilize the moral deserts of Hindoostan. But He who gave the spring, had graciously decreed that the channels should not be obstructed. In pity to millions in existence, and to generations yet unborn, He raised up advocates in either hemis-

phere to bear their testimony against this anti-christian policy, and to prepare the way for those triumphs which the Bible was destined to obtain, in the fulness of time, among the nations of the East.

But it will now be proper to resume our narrative of the practical business of the Institution. The Society itself, in its collective capacity, took no share whatever in the controversy which engaged so much of the public attention. In that spirit of dignified moderation which has ever marked its character, it pursued its course with unruffled calmness through all the vicissitudes of this painful trial; manifesting neither disquietude during the conflict, nor exultation in the event.

Among the objects of a miscellaneous nature which occupied the Committee towards the close of the fourth year, were, grants of the Holy Scriptures in different languages, to a variety of stations, both foreign and domestic. In this manner, Goree, Sierra Leone, New South Wales, Gibraltar, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Canada, were supplied with copies in English, Spanish, and Gaelic, according to their respective necessities, and their presumed disposition to profit by the bounty of the Institution. In some of the cases here specified, the gift was improved in a manner greatly surpassing the warmest expectation, and

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the kindness which conferred it, has since been repaid by liberal and successive contributions.

Similar grants were also made to schools of gratuitous education, to charitable Institutions, and to such other petitioners as could prefer reasonable claims to consideration and relief. These issues drew largely upon the Society's resources: the supply of the French prisoners alone, absorbed 7,000 copies of the Testament in that language; and not a little was expended in accommodating the schools in Ireland, as well Roman Catholic, as Protestant, with the privilege of purchasing the English Scriptures at very reduced prices.

The last was a case in which the feelings of the Committee very warmly accompanied every grant which emanated from their Board. Ireland was at all times a subject of affectionate solicitude; and every opportunity was eagerly seized to draw forth the native energies of its inhabitants, and assist them in their progress towards the acquisition of Scriptural knowledge. In the autumn of 1807, a Bible Committee was instituted by the Synod of Ulster; and, in the ensuing December, a Bible Society was established for the city and county of Cork, under the patronage of the Bishop of the diocese. Connecting these events with the recent accession of the highly respectable Archbishop of Cashel to the number

of their Vice-Presidents, the conductors of the British and Foreign Bible Society felt encouraged to hope that the period was not distant, when Ireland would be seen arrayed in all her national strength, under the banners of the Bible, and taking her full share in the great work of promoting the dissemination of its sacred contents in every portion of the world.

The cares and fatigues incidental to the business of the Society, were much less relieved this year than they had been in the preceding stages of its history, by interesting accounts from foreign parts. The war which raged through so large a portion of Europe had sealed up most of the channels through which such accounts must regularly pass; and the edict which forbad the countries in alliance with France (and which, by the success of its arms or its intrigues, constituted the principal nations on the Continent) to maintain a correspondence with England, not only restrained the friends of the Society from all direct intercourse with its conductors in London, but discouraged them from transmitting intelligence, with any degree of frequency, through channels of circuitous and indirect communication.

Scanty, however, as was the stock of information thus obtained, it was still sufficient to counteract the depressing influence of present interruption; and to afford a satisfactory assu-

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rance, that, amidst all the difficulties with which it was beset, on every hand, the cause of the British and Foreign Bible Society was neither retrograde nor stationary. Its conductors reflected, that they were engaged in promoting the distribution of a book which "has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter."* In such an undertaking, they felt emboldened to expect a prosperous issue; and when they saw how steadily it advanced against a current of almost unexampled discouragement, their faith in the event was greatly strengthened, and they seemed already to experience the fulfilment of the divine declaration: I WILL WORK, AND WHO SHALL LET IT. †

The German Society at Bâsle contrived to transmit a compendious report, from which it appeared, that they continued to labor with undiminished assiduity; the printing of the New Testament had actually commenced, and the Old Testament was on the point of being committed to the press.

Even the Berlin Bible Society were enabled, by some unsuspected medium of correspondence, to give expression to their feelings, both of gratitude and of sorrow. Embarrassed, but not discouraged, by the circumstances of their condition, they present "the fifty-sixth sheet of their

* Locke. † Is. xliii. 12.

Bohemian Bible," with an affecting mixture of anguish and exultation. While they acknowledge that their " distress is very great," and that " thousands groan under the pressure of extreme poverty;" and " recommend themselves to the continued sympathy and intercession" of the British and Foreign Bible Society, they glorify the Lord in the fires, and exclaim, through their Secretary: " Hallelujah! Blessed be the name of the Lord! In the midst of the convulsions of worldly kingdoms, His kingdom will increasingly prosper."

Such a strain as this, uttered amidst the lamentations of a despoiled and a subjugated people, illustrates the power of real religion, and evinces how little " the man of the earth" can effect in disquieting the subjects, or impeding the operations, of that kingdom which is not of this world.

The intelligence received from other parts of the world, though, like that from Europe, containing but little matter, was yet by no means destitute of interest and encouragement. Of this the reader may judge by the two following articles from two opposite points of the American continent, with which the facts of this year shall be concluded.

The Spanish Testaments which had been dispatched to Monte Video, in the preceding year, were stated to have proved highly acceptable,

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and even to have obtained a rapid and extensive circulation. It was asserted by the correspondent to whom they had been consigned, that this was the first instance in which Testaments in the Spanish language had found their way to South America. Applications for purchasing them were numerous; and among those who applied, were Roman Catholic priests, who not only received them themselves, but also "recommended them to others, as good and fair copies."

It is not, however, to be dissembled, that, upon the expulsion of the British from that posession; an event which speedily followed, this act of kindness was superseded by measures of a very different description. Scarcely had the Spanish colours waved over this recovered settlement, when the Roman Catholic Bishop of Buenos Ayres, called in, under the severest ecclesiastical penalties, all copies of the New Testament, as well as of other religious publications distributed by the British during the period it remained in their occupation. Had this Prelate replaced the Testaments which he suppressed, by others more congenial with the version accredited by his church, there could have been no just ground for complaining of his conduct. As it was, the people were forcibly deprived of the light which had been furnished them by the British and Foreign Bible Society; and nothing was given them as a substitute for its guidance, or an atonement for its loss. However,

the act of the Society was good; and many of its effects were doubtless beyond the reach of inquisitorial exaction. To have propagated, under whatever disadvantages, the word of God, is always to have done something. That word, at one period or other, will have its operation. *It shall not* (says its Author) *return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*

With the intelligence just referred to from the South, was connected some pleasing information from the North; particularly from the Indian settlements on the lakes of Upper Canada. Here it was ascertained, that the Mohawk Gospel of St. John, printed by the Society, was considered an acceptable treasure. What added to the satisfaction imparted by this intelligence, was, that, to the thanks of the Indians who had received it, as transmitted by their Chief, Captain Norton, the translator, was annexed a petition for a farther supply of copies, "for the use of the Roman Catholic and other Indians inhabiting lower down the St. Lawrence."

The fourth Anniversary now brought the proceedings of the Society during another year, under the review of its assembled subscribers and friends. The meeting was held at the same time and place as the preceding anniversary had been; and, while the President reported, as usual, the transactions of the year, the Archbishop of Cashel,

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(who had recently accepted the office of Vice-President,) and the Bishop of Durham, united, with many other distinguished personages, in supporting his Lordship, and countenancing the proceedings of the Institution, by their presence and their approbation. The business of the day renewed those emotions of concord and transport which have been described as characteristic of the former anniversaries. The scene was full of animation and interest. The conflicts and trials through which the Institution had passed, were all forgotten in the celebration of its successes; or only remembered, to swell the predominant feelings of wonder, and gratitude, and joy.

CHAPTER VI.

1808—9.

THE year upon which we are now to enter, presented, at its opening, a gloomy and repulsive aspect. Clouds of unusual darkness overspread the political horizon. The distress and perplexity of the European nations were extreme: the powers of heaven appeared literally to be shaken; and "the hearts of men" were every where "failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which seemed to be coming upon the earth."

A state of affairs so apparently impropitious, might have been expected to check the ardor, and discourage the exertions, of the British and Foreign Bible Society. But its conductors felt that they had a duty to discharge, which allowed no place for despondency or dejection. Animated, therefore, by the spirit of their cause, they resumed with alacrity their intermitted services; and "went forth to their work and to their labor" in the assured persuasion, that in due time they should reap, if they fainted not.

At home, it is true, partly, from the defeat of its East Indian opponents, and partly from its

own increasing reputation, the Institution was encouraged to bear up against the counteraction of the times, by the prospect of an effectual, though perhaps, a silent and gradual extension. But abroad, particularly on the continent of Europe, (by much the largest section of its field of operations,) the scene exhibited, was such as to inspire very faint hopes of the Society's progress in any direction, and to threaten it, in some, with serious embarrassment, if not with absolute and remediless exclusion.

It must, indeed, be admitted, that neither the proceedings of the British and Foreign Bible Society, nor of its allied associations, had, in any case, been subjected to direct and specific prohibition. But the systematic rigor with which English influence was opposed by the wide-spreading domination of France, rendered it increasingly difficult and dangerous for the inhabitants of the continent, those of Sweden alone excepted, to maintain any sort of intercourse, however innocent or honorable, with Great Britain, or any of its dependencies. In those countries, therefore, in which the councils or the arms of the common enemy prevailed, the utmost to which the Society, under present circumstances, could look, was, a silent and cautious advancement on the part of their continental correspondents; and a prosecution of the works already commenced, by that aid which might be occasionally admi-

nistered to them, through channels of accidental and unobserved communication.

Such was the fact with respect to the Societies at Berlin, and at Bâsle: accompanied, however, in each case, with indications of confidence, and efforts towards progress, which reflected the highest credit upon their zeal and perseverance. The truth of this statement will more particularly appear from what is now to be briefly narrated, as carrying on the history of both these Institutions.

At Berlin, the printing of the Bohemian Bible, which had been completed in September, 1807, was followed by so rapid a distribution of the copies, chiefly among the Protestant congregations using that language in Bohemia and Silesia, as to occasion regret that the impression had not been much more considerable. The success with which this work had been attended, and the information acquired by the correspondence to which it led, suggested to the conductors of the Society at Berlin, another and scarcely less important undertaking, an impression of the Polish Bible. Undismayed by the difficulties with which they were surrounded, and relying, under God, on the expected support of the British and Foreign Bible Society, they resolved to make the arduous attempt. Their expectation from the British and Foreign Bible Society was not disappointed. Upon the first

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intelligence of their design, the Committee in London greeted it with cheering assurances of aid; and, by successive grants, amounting in the whole to 800*l.*, induced its projectors to enlarge their edition from 5,000 Bibles (the number originally proposed) to 8,000 Bibles, and 2,000 additional Testaments.

The proceedings of the Society at Berlin have been uniformly characterized by a spirit of generous enterprize; but their conduct in the present instance, viewed in connection with the state of their city, and of the circumjacent country, exhibits a display of Christian magnanimity, which deserves our highest admiration. At a time when they had to lament, through the organ of their Secretary, "that the wounds of Prussia were still bleeding," and that "the distress of multitudes was increasing, and hundreds of families were without employment, without bread,"—it was in this awful crisis of depression and impoverishment, that the members of the Berlin Society, few in number, and low in resources, conceived the design of printing 5,000 copies of the Bible, for the benefit of their Polish fellow-Christians. They could not indeed withhold the confession, that, "owing to the desolating judgments which had lately befallen them, as a well-deserved punishment for their awful departure from God and His holy word, they had, in union with their neighbours, been reduced to such circumstances,

that they could expect but very small contributions;" yet, trusting with simplicity to the providence of God, and the promised co-operation of the British and Foreign Bible Society, they rose above the influence of every apprehension, and fearlessly embarked in their proposed undertaking.

A similar spirit of religious enterprise and perseverance actuated the members of the Bible Society at Bâsle, and carried them successfully through difficulties which would have overwhelmed men of weaker faith in the promises of God, and less ardent zeal for the propagation of His word. Amidst all the discouragements arising from the severe visitation of poverty and distress, and still more from "the melancholy effects of a prevailing spirit of luxury and ingratitude," they were enabled to issue their German Testament in the spring, and their complete Bible in the decline of 1808. On the performance of these works they had bestowed, as it appeared, extraordinary pains; and they were already rewarded by the testimony of approval with which they were received; and by the prospect of such a circulation as would be likely to create a demand for repeated editions.

To these exertions on behalf of their German fellow-countrymen, the Bâsle Society added their strenuous and useful efforts to supply their Protestant neighbours in the South of France with

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a similar advantage. They had already succeeded, greatly beyond their expectation, in disposing of French Bibles, at reduced prices, to some excellent ministers of that persuasion in Languedoc.* This success had the effect of stimulating the Bâsle Society to undertake another edition of the French Testament; and caused them to express their regret, that their funds did not authorize them to take a further step, by printing an impression of the entire Bible in that language. Such an object had not escaped the notice of the British and Foreign Bible Society, as likely, at one period or other, to come under the consideration of their correspondents at Bâsle. Under this conviction, they had, in a contract for stereotype plates of the French Bible, designed for domestic use, expressly stipulated for duplicates, in order that they might have it in their power, by transmitting a set to that station, to expedite the accomplishment of so desirable an object, whenever it should be required.

It ought not to be overlooked, of how much importance the Bible Society at Bâsle had become, as a vehicle for conveying the Scriptures in their own language to the Protestants in the South of France. The observation will confirm what has before been stated, of the advantages which were

* One hundred pounds had been contributed by the British and Foreign Bible Society for that purpose.

likely to attend the transfer of the German Bible Society from Nurenberg to Bâsle. The advantage now alluded to, is one, the value of which cannot be too highly appreciated: inasmuch as the Society at Bâsle afforded the conductors of the British and Foreign Bible Society a neutral and unsuspected medium of intercourse with France, during the long continuance of those political circumstances which precluded them from all access to the inhabitants of that country, in every other direction.

In the facts above recorded, the admiration of the reader has been directed towards the local Societies at Berlin, and at Bâsle. It will not detract from the praise which has been deservedly bestowed on these excellent Establishments, to remark, that the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society were not deficient in affording them the means of struggling, with success, against the current of adversity. The interposition, by turns, of sympathizing counsel, and seasonable liberality, tended materially to cherish their hopes, strengthen their resources, and encourage them, through all the vicissitudes of impoverishment and vexation, not only to continue, but to augment, their operations.

An account has already been given of the favorable condition in which Sweden was supposed to be with respect to the possession of the Scriptures. In consequence of that representa-

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tion, some years were suffered to elapse, without any attempt being made to promote, in that country, the work which, in a greater or less degree, was proceeding with effect in so many others. But the time was come, when Swedish inaction was to give place to an ardent zeal for disseminating the Holy Scriptures, and Stockholm was to add another Society to those already established for that purpose on the continent of Europe.

The history of the Institution erected at Stockholm will be found to connect with the event of Mr. Paterson's retirement from Copenhagen on account of the war, and the investigation which, during the suspension of his labors in Denmark, he was led to prosecute in Sweden. The result of this investigation which had been made with diligence, and under circumstances favorable for ascertaining the truth, agreed with the report which had been previously received, in some particulars, but differed from it in others, and those too of considerable importance. With that report it strictly concurred, so far as regarded the state of respectable families, and the houses of farmers and inn-keepers; in all which a Bible was regularly found: but here the agreement ended. The account transmitted by Mr. Paterson described the families of inferior consideration, the inhabitants of cottages and cabins, as almost totally destitute of

the word of God; and represented the possession of a Bible, as an article of property, in the case of a servant or a laborer, to be a thing unknown, and, from the high price which it bore, almost impossible.

The discrepancy between the two statements induced the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society to pause, before they should presume to determine what measures it might become them to take. Antecedently, therefore, to any decision upon the subject, they followed the line both of decorum and expediency, by referring the information of Mr. Paterson to the respectable Swedish authorities from which the more favorable intelligence had been derived. The event of this reference was an unequivocal confirmation of Mr. Paterson's statement, with respect to the wants of the lower classes in Sweden; and a consequent resolution of the British and Foreign Bible Society, to encourage the formation of an Establishment at Stockholm, for administering to their effectual and permanent relief.

Animated by the assurance of liberal co-operation from London, and by promises of support from persons of great respectability in Stockholm, Mr. Paterson drew up a memorial on the want of the Scriptures among the lower classes in Sweden, the duty of relieving it, and the means

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by which that end might be attained. The effect of this memorial, combined with other exertions directed to the same object, was the establishment of an Institution at Stockholm, under the designation of " the Evangelical Society," and with the high sanction of the King and Privy Council. The desire of effecting certain other religious purposes, and the impracticability, at that period, of forming separate Institutions for each, rendered it expedient to incorporate the distribution of the Scriptures, and of Religious Tracts, &c. in one common establishment. With a view, however, to secure a strict conformity to the fundamental rule of the British and Foreign Bible Society, that of circulating the Scriptures alone, provision was made in the constitution of " the Evangelical Society," that each of these objects should form the business of a separate department; and both the income and expenditure attaching to each, be kept regularly and religiously distinct.

The Stockholm Evangelical Society, having thus completed the organization which was necessary to qualify it for a connection with the British and Foreign Bible Society, announced its establishment, in a primary Address, dated the 20th of February, 1809. This Address breathes such a spirit of warm and generous piety, and describes, with so much clearness,

the origin, design, and circumstances, of the new Institution, that our narrative will be both illustrated and enlivened by its insertion.

" The Evangelical Society in Stockholm wishes to the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society grace and peace from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the Prince of the kings of the earth, that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.

" Honored and beloved Brethren,

" It is for the first time that we seek access to your venerable Society. May it be granted to us, and accompanied with the witness of the Spirit, that we are your fellow-partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Thus we salute each other with an holy salutation.

" We regard you with reverence. You have undertaken a great work; and your exertions and sacrifices are worthy of the grand aim which you have in view.

" You extend your operations over the remotest parts of the globe, and the islands of the sea. All that remains of the daughter of Zion in Christendom rejoices in your light. Dispersed, like solitary cottages in a vineyard; concealed, as lonely lodges in a garden of cucumbers; they feel their weary eyelids pressed

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down by dark, sultry, and tempestuous clouds: yet a glimpse of cheering light penetrates their huts: they perceive, in the firmament of the Church, some morning stars; and among these your Society shines most conspicuous. This sight gladdens their hearts, and they wait with patient expectation for the approaching rise of the Sun of Righteousness. But even on the most distant nations, Mahomedan, as well as Heathen, who are sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, this light now begins to dawn. With unexampled exertion—to each in his own language—you send the word of life. Oh, thou, our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come; for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

"It is impossible for us to describe the feelings of admiration, which filled our minds, when we attentively perused the last Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society. These Reports cannot but excite esteem for all those men who labor in this cause, with such unwearied diligence, and consecrate all the powers of art and science to the service of God—and for a public which so generously aids these endeavours. Mr. Paterson, to whom we are indebted for the communication of the above Reports, has drawn our attention more than ever to the great want of Bibles which exists in various parts of our

country, chiefly among the lower classes of people; at the same time, reminding us of our duty to relieve this want, and recommending means for the attainment of this desirable object. This he did by an Address circulated in manuscript among the friends of religion in this metropolis; which gave rise to the establishment of a Society, denominated 'the Evangelical Society,' which we are happy to state has received the full approbation and sanction of our most gracious King.

"After a mature deliberation, and having previously consulted several exalted Patrons, we found it most advisable not to form ourselves into a separate Bible Society, but to include in one Society the two-fold object, the circulation of the Sacred Scriptures, and the distribution of Religious Tracts. We therefore determined to entrust the execution of this design to one and the same Committee; yet a fundamental rule was added, that each of the two branches should have its separate funds, and a distinct account of the income and expenditure of each should be kept, and annually laid before the public. We hope this arrangement will meet with your approbation.

"Our plan is to print (if possible) the Sacred Scriptures in the Swedish language on standing types, and to begin this work with the New Testament. We have already received some

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donations for this purpose; and we trust to meet with as much support as the present pressure of the times, and the distressed state of our country, will admit. But should we be left to our own resources alone, we fear it will take a long time, before we shall be able to procure the needful fund of types for the printing of the New Testament. To say the truth, this will be impossible, in our circumstances, for a number of years.

"But the generous assistance you have given to other countries, encourages us to direct our eyes to you. Kindly remember the poor of our land; for surely there are numbers among us, who are poor in outward circumstances, but far more poor still in the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Lend them your helping hand; and let your noble humanity induce you to favor our new-born Society with your support in its infancy, that it may grow up to a man in Christ. We shall consider ourselves responsible to God and to you for the application of those means which you may think proper to entrust to our care. Our ardent wish is to enter upon the execution of our plan without delay, and to be helped by your experience, advice, and support. Every communication from you will be highly acceptable to us. Some of us understand so much of the English language, that they can convey the sense of a letter to the rest. But none can

write it; you will therefore permit us to address you in German. Now, honored brethren, we commend ourselves to your benevolence, friendship, and intercession. Farewell, and be happy in looking up to Jesus, the great Author and Finisher of our faith. May his divine blessing accompany all your efforts for the propagation of that mystery of godliness which the Father and Lord of heaven and earth has concealed from the wise and prudent of this world, and revealed unto babes. May all lands enjoy the blessings of the Gospel, and may the whole earth be filled with the knowledge and glory of God!"

The receipt of this communication was cordially welcomed by the conductors of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Projecting the spiritual instruction of the whole human race, they could not but view, with pleasure and thankfulness, successive Institutions, of a kindred nature to their own, rising into existence by their example, and challenging their friendship, countenance, and co-operation. The present also was a case in which a peculiar interest was added to the event, by the antecedent improbability of its occurrence in the capital of a country, whose population was represented as having "no want of Bibles." The result was, on the

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part of the British and Foreign Bible Society, an immediate grant of 300*l.*, together with a congratulatory address on the accomplishment of an object calculated immediately to benefit the Swedish population, and ultimately, as it was hoped, to assist in promoting the welfare of mankind.

Thus was a foundation laid in the capital of Sweden, upon which a National Bible Society was hereafter to be erected. The good produced in the meantime by this limited and temporary Establishment, exceeded any calculation which could have been made upon its probable means and exertions. Such was its activity, that it dispersed the sacred treasures of divine truth through an extensive range of country; and many parts of the kingdom participated in its attention, which might have appeared to be removed beyond the reach of its operations, and almost of its concern. The Stockholm Evangelical Society was, in fact, the first depôt in which the Scriptures were printed and accumulated for distribution in the North of Europe. It was in the bosom of this Society that the zeal for circulating the word of God, first kindled by the movements of the British and Foreign Bible Society, continued to burn, till it had warmed into life the Swedish Provinces, and propagated through them a kindred flame which

reached at length the very heart of the Russian Empire.

Before taking our leave of the European continent, it will not be uninteresting to follow the 400 German Bibles, and 200 Testaments, designed for the German colonies on the banks of the Wolga,* to their destination; and to observe the transport of joy and gratitude with which they were received by the poor, but pious, inhabitants of that distant settlement. The scene is described by the Rev. Mr. Huber of Catharinenstadt, who assisted to distribute the books, as exceedingly impressive; and it will appear from the following statement, given by himself, that his own exertions contributed not a little to heighten the effect.

"The Bibles and Testaments which were sent by the English Bible Society, as a present to the German colonies near the Wolga, are safely arrived, and have been distributed among a number of poor people, by whom they were received with great joy and gratitude. To the distribution of them in four parishes I can speak myself, having been employed as the honored instrument of giving away 144 copies. These four Protestant parishes embrace no less than thirty-two villages, which are greatly dispersed, and at a very considerable distance from each other. But I made it a point to go to them all. Immemediately after my arrival at a village, I as-

* See p. 253.

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sembled the elders, and the schoolmaster of the congregation; requested them to select the poorest young people who could read, and yet were entirely destitute of a Bible, and the means of procuring one; and gave them a short address, in which I endeavoured to impress their minds with the inestimable value of the Holy Scriptures: if it happened to be a Sunday, I preached in their church. I then told them of the generous gift of the English Bible Society; and called upon the rich to assist me by their contributions, that these Bibles might be given to the young people, free from any expense of conveyance: or, if I could not succeed in this way, I went round in the village from house to house, begging as much as I wanted. The many thousand (English) miles which the Bibles and Testaments had to travel, before they could reach us, made them come to about 20 copecks a Testament, and a rouble a Bible; and exactly thus much I collected among the congregations themselves, that the Scriptures might be gratuitously distributed among their most necessitous members. My journey was attended with trouble and expense; but I felt myself amply repaid by the joyful sight I witnessed, and by the many tears of gratitude which I saw flow. Indeed, when I heard many an honest, godly man pronounce his blessing upon the remote benefactors, I felt so delighted, that I could have gladly made again

this troublesome tour. Some very worthy people came on purpose to express to me their feelings on the occasion: ' Pray' (said they) ' do not forget to return our most respectful thanks to this excellent Society; and tell them, that we feel quite constrained to implore a particular blessing on such active friends of Christ.' "

A similar account was afterwards transmitted from Lesnoi Karamisch, by the Rev. Mr. Hiemer, who confirmed the description given by his colleague of Catharinenstadt; and united with him in offering* the thanks of the colonists, and more especially the poor, who had been presented with Bibles or Testaments, for a donation so greatly esteemed.

There is something peculiarly gratifying to a benevolent mind, in the contemplation of kindness, like that which has just been described, travelling to the relief of objects, at once so obscure and so remote as to have precluded the hope, and it should have seemed, almost the possibility, of their receiving it from the quarter from which it actually proceeded. Situated, as the Society was, in the metropolis of Great Britain, and em-

* The following is given by Mr. Huber as the inscription which he placed on the title-page of each Bible: "This Bible is the precious gift of the English Bible Society; never to be sold, but to be made a good use of:—The Clergyman will not fail to make his inquiries hereafter."

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barrassed in its movements by a multitude of intervening obstacles, it forms a pleasing spectacle to behold it thus fetching up the waters of life from a town in Saxony, and dispersing them with such invigorating efficacy among the thirsty inhabitants of a secluded district on the borders of Tartary.

This consideration appears to have impressed very forcibly the mind of the Rev. Mr. Hiemer; and his reflection upon a review of the transaction, shall terminate this account.

" I am indeed struck with admiration at the great work which God is carrying on in England, and at the zeal which the numerous Societies in that country, all animated by one spirit, display for the propagation of the Gospel throughout all parts of the globe. It appears to me, as if our blessed Saviour, in these days of general falling off and tribulation upon earth, were hastening to manifest himself to his people in his re-appearing; and that, as his Gospel must first be preached throughout the whole world, he has produced these *extraordinary* efforts, through the influence of his Spirit, for the express purpose that he may himself the sooner appear."

While the cause of the Society was thus advancing, though by slow degrees, in countries subject to the dominion, or intimidated by the policy of our inveterate enemy, and establishing

itself with great promise of success in the only kingdom in Europe which afforded an open field for its free and undissembled operations, its exertions at home were continued with unabating alacrity, and unwearied perseverance. Large editions of the English and Welsh Scriptures were put to press; and to the impressions already executed in the foreign languages were added, in the course of this year, editions in the Portuguese, the Italian, the Ancient and Modern Greek, the Dutch, and the Danish.

In printing the Portuguese Testament, the Society had respect to the numerous individuals of that nation, serving aboard British vessels; to the Portuguese islands and colonies, by the events of the war subjected to the British crown; and to the facilities presented, by a recent change of political circumstances, for distributing the Scriptures in Portugal.

The subject of the Italian and the Modern Greek Scriptures was taken up, under a persuasion, to which considerable encouragement had been given, that copies of them would be found very acceptable in different parts of the Mediterranean, and in the Levant. The attention of the Society had indeed been incidentally called* to the expediency of printing the Scriptures in Modern Greek at a very early period

* By the Rev. D. Bogue, of Gosport.

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after its establishment. A record was made of the suggestion; (for such was the form in which it purported to be given and received;) but it was not till the commencement of 1808, that any serious consideration was bestowed upon it.

Shortly previous to that time, the arrival of the Rev. J. F. Usko in this country from the Levant, a circumstance occasioned by the rupture between Great Britain and the Porte, had, through the intervention of Bishop Porteus, brought into communication with the conductors of the Society a man, who, in addition to the knowledge he was reputed to possess of the European and Oriental languages in general, had acquired, by a long residence at Smyrna, an intimate acquaintance with the dialect, the opinions, and the habits of the Modern Greeks.

To Mr. Usko were submitted the several particulars on which the question of printing a portion of the Scriptures in their own dialect, for the use of this people, principally turned; and the opinions he gave on them severally, led to an unanimous decision in favor of the experiment. The only point on which any serious doubt had been entertained, was, whether the projected edition would be generally, or at all, received by the Modern Greeks. To the query suggested by this doubt, Mr. Usko replied, that the Modern Greeks, having changed the ancient language of

their ancestors into a new one, as the Italians had done the Latin, made use of the modern or new* language in all transactions of business, in conversation, and in correspondence; and that although they employed the ancient in their churches for divine service, yet they preached in the vulgar tongue: that their Patriarch and themselves, when they addressed the people in the Church, did it always in the modern language, as he had himself had many opportunities of observing; and, finally, that translations of European books, and original compositions, both in prose and verse, were very current in this language, and read by the people (as being much more intelligible to them than the ancient Greek authors) with great readiness and delight. Mr. Usko's conclusion therefore was, that an edition of the New Testament in their own language would be very agreeable to the Modern Greeks; and this conclusion, as will hereafter appear, has been, and continues to be, increasingly confirmed.†

To the benefit derived on this occasion from

* For an excellent account of this new language, called the Neo-Greek, or Romeika, see Mr. Butler's *Horæ Biblicæ*, p. 155.

† The reception given to the first translation in 1638, was not very encouraging. "Si quæras (says Largius in his Dissertation on this edition) in quo pretio hæc versio sit Græcis habita, omnino respondendum fuerit, pretium vix adeò magnum illam fuisse consecutam in Græcia." The edition in 1703,

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Mr. Usko's knowledge and judgment, was added that of his personal services, voluntarily tendered, and thankfully accepted, in correcting the press. The work was printed from the edition at Halle, in 1710; but (as was the case in the first translation printed at Geneva in 1638) with the Ancient and Modern Greek in parallel columns. This plan was recommended by Dr. Adam Clarke, and approved by Mr. Usko: to the latter were awarded, in return for his valuable labors, the thanks of the Committee; the only remuneration he would consent to receive for assistance which he was not more able than willing to impart.

To the printing of the Scriptures in the two last of the before-named languages, the Dutch and the Danish, the Society was first stimulated by affecting representations of the great want of Bibles and Testaments among the prisoners of war belonging to those nations, but particularly to the latter. The Rev. Dr. Werninck, Minister of the Dutch, and the Rev. U. F. Rosing, Minister of the Danish Churches in London, were the individuals, who, with a zeal and sympathy

containing a preface offensive to the Greek Bishops, was burnt, by order of the Patriarch of Constantinople. (See *Horæ Biblicæ*, p. 160.) To these facts, the acceptance with which the Society's edition (without preface or notes) has been favored, and the sanction which it has obtained from the Patriarch, form a very grateful and interesting contrast.

which reflected great honor on their pastoral functions, made known to the Society the spiritual wants of their captive countrymen, and earnestly pleaded for their relief. "If" (said Mr. Rosing) "the gift of the Bible be a valuable thing to every person, it must be peculiarly so to the man who is confined within the narrow walls of a prison. Without employment, with his time hanging heavy, and misery pressing hard upon him, he will be naturally excited to receive the instruction, to seek the comfort, and to follow the advice of religion; in proportion as he feels himself in want of her aid, and discovers in her his only resource and refuge." Mr. Rosing then goes on to state, that the number of Danish prisoners of war at the several depôts, amounted to 2,782; that among more than 1,300 whom he had visited at Chatham, he had found but two Bibles; and that he had reason to believe, that the rest were not in a less destitute situation. "If, therefore," (adds Mr. Rosing) "through the generous efforts of your Society, Bibles could be procured for them, an actual want will unquestionably be supplied; and they will have to thank the Society for blessings *which could not have been derived from any other source*."* The result of

* When the depôt at Greenlaw was visited by a deputation from the Edinburgh Bible Society, in 1809, between five and six hundred Danish prisoners were found, and *only one Danish Bible among them*, which the owner said he had saved out of many things which he had lost.

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these pleadings, on the part of Dr. Werninck, and Mr. Rosing, was a determination to print both a Dutch and a Danish New Testament; and the extent of the editions in each case was calculated by a reference to the prospect of their being circulated with acceptance in the Dutch and Danish colonies, both in the East and West Indies, which in the course of the war had universally fallen under the dominion of Great Britain.

In the mean time, those measures which had been adopted for supplying the hospitals, goals, and workhouses, throughout the kingdom, were carried on with vigor and regularity; and every opportunity was embraced to distribute copies of the Scriptures, in those languages in which the Society possessed them, wherever a probability existed of their being thankfully received, and attentively perused. Whether the applications proceeded from those who were nigh, or from those who were afar off; whether they respected kindred or aliens, the destitute of our own, or of foreign countries; they found a Board always prepared to give them a kind reception, and to administer, to the full extent of its means, a prompt and effectual supply.

It is scarcely possible to estimate the good which may have been effected through the instrumentality of an Institution at once so vigilant and so active. Unfettered by ceremonious for-

mality, exclusive attachment, or minute calculation, it felt simply and capaciously for the spiritual wants of mankind; and, in the contemplation of their relief, made no distinction of nation or communion; and declined no sacrifice, either of exertion or expenditure. Aware that, on a sudden, demands might be made, and opportunities of distribution might offer, and unwilling that any should be suffered to pass away without a suitable degree of attention and improvement, the Society was careful to provide against surprise, by keeping in hand a competent stock of the Scriptures, in the languages to which such exigences were thought most likely to apply. It resulted from this policy, that when the British Government allowed the Spanish prisoners of war to join the patriotic standard which their countrymen had unexpectedly erected against the invader and enslaver of their nation, the agents of the British and Foreign Bible Society were prepared to accompany this generous act of release, with the gift of a Spanish New Testament. Seven hundred and seventy-five of these captives received, each a copy, as they embarked for the land of their nativity; and, with tears of joy and thankfulness, they carried off the precious seed, to spread it over a soil in which, perhaps, it has been less sparingly sown than in almost any other portion of Christendom.

In like manner, when, in the month of January,

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1809, part of Junot's army were driven into Penzance by foul weather, the Society, informed of this occurrence, dispatched, without delay, a supply of French Testaments, which were immediately distributed among this band of enemies; and the person who applied for, and distributed them, W. H. Hoare, Esq. an active and benevolent member of the Committee, reported, that they were received with gratitude, and that on the following morning he found two French officers reading them with attention. In this, and in all similar cases, the Society appeared, it should be observed, on ground which no Institution before had undertaken to occupy; and the receiver of its gifts had (in the just language of Mr. Rosing) "to thank it for blessings which they could not have derived from any other source."

It was while thus employed in prosecuting the general concerns of the Society, dispensing copies of the Scriptures to some, preparing them for others, and projecting their dispersion among all, that the Committee received the important intelligence of the establishment of a Bible Society in the city of Philadelphia.* This event, which

* The following tribute of respect to the memory of a leading promoter of this Society, will be read with sympathy by every friend to the general cause.

"While the managers of this Society offer their gratitude to Almighty God, for preserving their body, during past years, from vacancies produced by death, they are, on this occasion,

took place on the 12th of December, 1808, gave to the British and Foreign Bible Society an auspicious entrance on the western continent; and opened to its conductors prospects of usefulness in the new world, little inferior to those which it had hitherto enjoyed in the old. The intelligence was officially announced in terms which ascribed the formation of the Philadelphia Bible Society to the example and influence of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and respectfully and affectionately deferred to it as to a patroness and a parent. In an admirable address, the managers of this first American Society unfolded their views with regard to the origin and design of their Institution. Its origin (as has already been mentioned) they attribute "to the example offered, and the efforts made, by the British and Foreign Bible Society." "From the time" (they say) "that it was known in this city, it at-

called to the mournful duty of paying a tribute of respect due to their late venerable associate, Dr. Benjamin Rush, of this city. It was with deep regret that they heard of his decease. He was not merely an honor to his profession and to his country, as a physician, but an ornament to religion, as a zealous friend of the Bible. Among the first to give existence and energy to this Society, he drafted its constitution; and ever since its establishment he was one of its Vice-Presidents. A good Providence, it is hoped, will fill up those vacancies among the supporters of Bible Institutions which death, time after time, may produce."—*Fifth Report of the Philadelphia Bible Society.*

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tracted the marked attention of several persons accustomed to take an interest in whatever is calculated to extend the influence of revealed truth. It was immediately seen, that the necessity for such an Institution was the same here as in Europe; and that there was every reason to believe, that, if suitable exertions were made, it could not fail of encouragement." After assigning their reasons for choosing their limited designation, they express a hope, " that the time is not distant when they shall see Institutions similar to their own, in the town of Boston, and in the cities of New Haven, New York, Baltimore, Richmond, and Savannah, and in the town of Lexington, and the state of Kentucky." And they assert, that they " will at all times be ready cordially to greet, as a sister-Institution, every Bible Society, in whatever place or part of their country it shall appear."

In explaining their *design*, they state that " it is to the poor, chiefly, they have it in expectation to send the inspired and authentic records of the gospel:" " to enable them to see for themselves the provision made by the Father of mercies, to sustain them under the privations and sufferings of time, by the hope of happiness in eternity."

But " while the poor, generally, will thus claim the peculiar notice of the Society, a still more especial regard" (they observe) " may be shown to those who suffer from confinement, or from

crime, as well as from poverty. We cannot express it" (they add) "without emotion, that we hope the time is at hand, when the beams of the Sun of Righteousness, reflected from the Holy Scripture, will penetrate and cheer the gloom of every prison in the State of Pennsylvania."

From the poor, and the prisoner, they pass to families in confined circumstances; to soldiers and sailors, who "would, they are persuaded, often prize the gift of a Bible, and find in it the best support and solace of their hazardous and laborious occupations;" and to "the Indians on the frontiers, and the poor Africans, scattered through the States:" and, finally, they sum up the particulars of their design in this compendious declaration, "It is, indeed, not easy to foresee all the cases which may occur, to demand the attention of the Society. As they arise, they will be distinctly considered, and the general rule of proceeding will be—WHEREVER THE BIBLE OUGHT TO BE POSSESSED, AND CANNOT, OR WILL NOT, OTHERWISE BE OBTAINED, THERE TO BESTOW IT FREELY."

In this address (the whole of which is well worthy of perusal) may be seen the prototype of the numerous addresses, recommendatory of Bible Societies, which have since done so much honor to the religious character of the Americans; and contributed so greatly to enlarge the stock,

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both of argument and exhortation, in favor of the distribution of the Scriptures. If to Great Britain belongs the honor of producing the Philadelphia Bible Society, Philadelphia may, on her part, claim equally the honor of having set the first example of a Bible Society in the United States of America; and of having, by her zeal, liberality, and discriminative wisdom, induced so extensive an imitation of her conduct, as not to leave a single State throughout the Union, unprovided with one or more of these excellent and most useful Establishments.

The British and Foreign Bible Society lost no time in expressing, according to its usual manner, its joy on receiving the interesting communication which has just been transcribed, and its desire to improve the event to which it referred, for the advantage of the general cause. The sum of 200*l.* was immediately voted to this Trans-Atlantic auxiliary; and in the letter which conveyed intelligence of the grant, the conductors of the Philadelphia Society were admonished to "proceed in giving to their infant Institution every possible degree of latitude and efficacy:" "to hold out the Sacred Scriptures in their naked simplicity, as a rallying point to the several denominations of Christians in the American Union: and to reckon, in the prosecution of this glorious work, upon the blessing of God,

the prayers of all good men, and the cordial co-operation of the British and Foreign Bible Society."

The formation of the first Bible Society in the United States of America was soon after followed by another event, not less memorable in the History of the Institution, the establishment of the first Auxiliary Bible Society in Great Britain. Glasgow, London, and Birmingham, have been severally particularized, as giving existence, in the order now described, though on different scales of magnitude, to "Associations," contributing in a collective form to the funds of the Institution: but it was reserved for the town of Reading to give to the country, and to the world, the first example of a regular "Auxiliary Bible Society."

It had, for some time past, been an object with the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society, to promote the establishment of local Associations. With this view, they inserted in their Fourth Report the following passage, recommendatory of such establishments.

"The Association established in London for contributing to its funds have continued their active exertions with increased effect. And the funds of the Society have received an augmentation from Congregational Collections in England, as well as from the liberality of individuals. In their Appendix to their Second Report, your

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Committee published an extract from the resolution of the Birmingham Association, as affording an example of a plan of proceeding peculiarly adapted to aid the object of the British and Foreign Bible Society; and the benefit which has been derived from it, as well as from the Association in London, and a similar one in Glasgow, makes them anxious to point out these Associations which have been established for the special purpose of aiding the funds of this Society, in the hopes that they will become objects of imitation, wherever such a measure is practicable, throughout the island."

In what degree these hints contributed to the movement which took place at Reading, it is neither easy to ascertain, nor material to inquire. Our purpose will be sufficiently answered, by describing briefly the manner in which the formation of this Auxiliary Society was brought about, and specifying the agents who principally contributed to its establishment.

Previously, however, to entering into this detail, it will be proper to observe, that, in the year 1807, a Society had been formed at Greenock in Scotland, under the designation of "The Greenock and Port Glasgow Society," for the professed object "of circulating the Holy Scriptures in places where they are most wanted, and of assisting other Societies which have the same views." This Society, though not tributary to the

British and Foreign Bible Society exclusively, and, therefore, not claiming to be regarded as one of its professed Auxiliary Societies, contributed very liberally to its resources; and, upon merging into the "Greenock and Port Glasgow West Renfrewshire Bible Society," in 1813, transmitted, as a final contribution, the remainder of its funds, with a valedictory letter, in which the Secretary thus expresses the sentiments of the body.

"The dissolution of a Society which, during six years, has afforded to its Members so many delightful opportunities of cultivating the principles of mutual charity, as well as of contributing to improve the spiritual condition of many of their fellow-creatures, could not be contemplated without feelings of deep regret, which nothing could have countervailed but the confident expectation, that, by the change, the same object will be carried forward on a scale greatly enlarged, and with a vigor and success proportioned to the number and influence of the persons engaged.

"Permit me only, farther, in the name of the late Greenock and Port Glasgow Bible Society, to return to the Parent Society, through you, their grateful thanks for the attention with which they have all along been honored, and to express their fervent wishes, that the great and benevolent plans which they have been led to form, may be crowned with success, and be the means of accelerating that happy period, when all nations

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shall read and hear in their own tongue the wonderful works of God."

Having endeavored to do some justice to an unassuming but meritorious Institution, the author will now return to the subject of the Reading Auxiliary Bible Society.

The Rev. Dr. Valpy, of Reading, whose erudition and philanthropy have conferred no ordinary reputation on that town which has for so many years been the seat of his scholastic labors, had distinguished his attachment to the British and Foreign Bible Society, by preaching on its behalf, both at Wallingford and at Wrington, and by other unequivocal testimonies of a concern for its welfare. Through the persevering exertions of this gentleman and others who participated in his sentiments and feelings, a Public Meeting was convened in the Town Hall at Reading, under the sanction of the Mayor, on the 28th of March, 1809; when an "Auxiliary Bible Society" was established for the town and vicinity of Reading, on the principles and "regulations of the Parent Society," and with the professed design of "contributing to its laudable undertaking." The business of the day was rendered particularly interesting by the presence of the venerable William Sharp,* Esq., at that time

* May the author be permitted, when mentioning a name, so dear to himself, and so deserving of affectionate commemo-

verging on his eighty-first year; and its object was materially promoted by the countenance given to it on the part of the Rev. Robert Nares, Archdeacon of Stafford, and Vicar of St. Mary's, Reading.

To Archdeacon Nares the author has personal obligations, which he is happy to find any opportunity of acknowledging: but he is only dis-

ration by every friend of religion and humanity, to trespass, by a brief extract from a Discourse delivered by him on occasion of the death of that excellent man, and referring expressly to his regard for the British and Foreign Bible Society?

"He loved affectionately all good men. The strictness of his Creed—for in this he never relaxed—in no degree interfered with the expansion of his heart. He honored the image of God, wherever he seemed to discover it; and rejoiced in every measure which tended to bring within the bonds of brotherly love, the disunited members of the Church of Christ. By this impulse of Christian charity he was led to hail the establishment of that Society which promised to facilitate, in a degree beyond all former precedent, the accomplishment of so desirable an end. He watched the progress of this Institution, while its line was going out through all the earth, and its words to the end of the world; promoted its interests by all the powers which remained to him, both of body and mind; and honored its anniversaries by the countenance of his venerable presence, and by the applauding testimony of his tears. Five of these festivals he had witnessed; and it was the desire of his heart—were it consistent with that will to which he was always resigned—to witness a sixth. But he had another, and a better destination: for ere that era should arrive, he was to take his place in a higher region; and to celebrate the triumphs of Christian faith and love in a larger and more august assembly."

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charging a public duty, when he bears testimony to the decided attachment which the Archdeacon has manifested to the British and Foreign Bible Society, and to the constancy with which, through all the vicissitudes of public opinion, he has persevered to support and defend it.*

The Reading Auxiliary Bible Society very soon obtained the patronage of the Bishop of Salisbury, who cheerfully became its President: and of so great importance did this Institution appear to Bishop Porteus, that his Lordship reprinted, on a separate sheet, the report of the proceedings at its formation, as it appeared in the county papers; and distributed copies, with great zeal and earnestness, among several of his clergy, as well as more particular friends.

This event, together with the formation of "the

* It redounds to the credit of the Archdeacon, that "The British Critic," during the period that it continued under his management, was the faithful ally of the British and Foreign Bible Society; and, with the exception of one article, obtruded upon the editor from an opponent of *high rank*, now no more, it uniformly defended the Institution against the insinuations and the calumnies with which it was so perseveringly assailed. Perhaps, if it were publicly known into whose hands the property has passed since the Archdeacon resigned it, some account might be given of the cause which has led to the strange, and almost unexampled inconsistency, of making a publication of respectable name the instrument of stultifying itself, and of giving the lie to almost every thing it has advanced for a number of years in behalf of a great National Institution.

Bible Society of Nottingham and its Vicinity," which took place on the 30th of the same month, was regarded by the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society, with a similar feeling to that which it had excited in the breast of the good Bishop of London. The sense they entertained of the value of these Institutions, and their desire of exciting through them a spirit of emulation, were thus expressed in the Annual Report which it may not be amiss to anticipate.

" It is with sentiments of the sincerest satisfaction that your Committee advert to an event, of which, from the notoriety given to it through the public papers, the Members of the Society can scarcely be ignorant: your Committee allude to the formation of an Auxiliary Bible Society at Reading, in aid of the British and Foreign Bible Society. The zealous and effectual manner in which the Reading Bible Society has been constituted, the distinguished patronage which it has obtained, (the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Salisbury, one of your Vice-Presidents, having accepted the Presidency of it,) and finally, the liberality and union so unanimously manifested in its support, entitle its promoters and contributors to the respect and gratitude of the Parent Institution.

" Intelligence has also been very recently received of another Auxiliary Institution having been formed at Nottingham, under the desig-

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nation of ' The Bible Society of Nottingham and its Vicinity.'

" Your Committee are so deeply impressed with the advantage which must result to the interests and usefulness of the British and Foreign Bible Society from such Establishments in aid of their funds, that they earnestly recommend the precedents furnished by ' the Birmingham Association,' ' the Reading Auxiliary Society,' and ' the Bible Society of Nottingham and its Vicinity,' (the several regulations of which will be found in the Appendix to this Report,) to the consideration of such towns throughout the kingdom as may be disposed to promote the object of their Institution."

The indications which the establishment of these Auxiliary Societies* was considered to give of the advancement of the Parent Insti-

* The author might perhaps have been excused, had he treated the origin of Auxiliary Societies—an instrument of so great efficacy—as adding another to the many instances in which Providence appears to have favored the British and Foreign Bible Society. Dr. Wordsworth professes to regard the adoption of a similar expedient in the year 1810 by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, " as a merciful example of the fulfilment of his word, who has promised to be with his church unto the end of the world."

Letter to Lord Teignmouth, p. 157.

The devout reader, who, with the author, is a sincere well-wisher to both Institutions, will probably be of opinion, that neither observation is altogether destitute of truth.

tution in the public esteem, were strengthened by the unequivocal evidence of a growing disposition throughout the Empire to encourage its exertions, and improve its resources.

Ireland had indeed too many demands from her own population upon the slender funds of her two Bible Societies, at Dublin, and at Cork, to have any thing to spare for the promotion of the general cause. It was obvious that the connection of these bodies with the Parent Society in London, must, from the circumstances of their situation, be, for a period at least, a connection of dependence, or of mutual good-will. The only way in which they could be expected to contribute to its interest, would be by occupying, with its aid, in a field—and that a most important one too—from which its labors must otherwise be excluded; and by returning the pecuniary supplies which they occasionally received from its liberality, in the fruits of a vigorous and successful co-operation.

The following extracts from their respective Reports, while they communicate general information on the state of Ireland as to the Holy Scriptures, will show, that the hope of vigorous co-operation in that quarter with the British and Foreign Bible Society was not without reasonable foundation.

"During the time your Committee have been in office," (say the Committee of the Hibernian

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Bible Society*,) " they have had repeated proofs of the necessity and usefulness of the Society. A very general desire to purchase and read the Bible prevails in Ireland; and yet in several parts of the country, the Bible cannot be obtained, at least, by the lower classes. A letter from a clergyman, in a very populous district of the

* The Report of the Hibernian Bible Society was read to the General Meeting at Dublin, November 14, 1808, in the presence of the Archbishop of Dublin, (the Earl of Normanton,) President of the Institution. The author had an opportunity, which he did not neglect, of introducing the subject of the British and Foreign Bible Society to the knowledge of the Archbishop, during his temporary residence at Fulham, in the Spring of 1807; and afterwards heard, with no little satisfaction, that his Grace had, in the December of that year, become the President of the Hibernian Bible Society; presided at its anniversary, as related, in November, 1808, and, on the termination of the meeting, presented it with a donation of 100*l.* In this manner the Archbishop redeemed the pledge which he was pleased to give the author in a letter, which, as it contains a record of His Grace's sentiments on the merits of the British and Foreign Bible Society, it may not be amiss to insert.

Arundel House, Fulham,
May 27, 1807.

" Rev. Sir,

" I have received and read, with great satisfaction, your account of the Bible Society here. And as soon as I return to Ireland, I will make myself acquainted with the state and circumstances of our Society there; in order to ascertain, what, upon the whole, had best be done, to promote the objects of these useful Institutions.

" I am, Reverend Sir,
" Your faithful humble servant,
The Rev. John Owen. " CHARLES DUBLIN."

North of Ireland, stated to your Committee, that in his neighbourhood the Bible could not be procured *for any money*. From this circumstance the Society may judge what must be the case in those parts of the land where the people are less instructed, and where, of course, it might be expected that books would be very scarce."

"Of the usefulness of the Society," (they justly observe,) "the best proof is the following statement of the books circulated during the last year; viz.

Bibles	2,446
Testaments	2,452
Total	4,898

They conclude their Report "by urging on each Member of the Society the necessity of increased exertion in the best of all causes, the improvement of their country in civilization, morality, and religion." "Of all nations of the earth, we are" (they add) "the most favored by Providence. While other lands are wasted by famine, or desolated by war, we are in the enjoyment of prosperity and domestic peace; and surely the least return we can make to the bountiful Author of these blessings, is, to diffuse among our countrymen the knowledge of his Gospel."

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The extract from the Cork Report, to which the reader's attention is requested, is as follows:

"It was with astonishment and regret that your Committee noticed the marked opposition with which the Society was threatened at its formation; an opposition the more surprising, when the professed object of the Association is considered—that of the more general diffusion of *Divine Truth*, by the medium of God's sacred word among all classes of professing Christians—and that without any further design or prospect of proselytism, than as the sacred volume itself is calculated to produce such an effect.

"But as your Committee expected, so they had the happiness to find, that the gloom which overspread the dawn of the Institution was not of long continuance. The progress of Truth, though often slow, is uniform and steady. The outcry raised against the Bible Society, as subservient to the interests of a party, and not to the general cause of religious knowledge, was seen to have originated in prejudice and misconception, those deadly foes to the emancipation of the human mind, which too often drown all candid inquiry in clamour, and cause the truth itself to be viewed through a distorted medium.

"A happy revolution of the public sentiments in its favor has been abundantly marked by the liberal and enlightened patronage it has received, and the highly respectable auspices under which

it was formed: its supporters have evinced their zeal for the best interests of their fellow-creatures; —we are happy to observe, that their benevolent designs have been crowned with unlooked-for success.

"The amount of subscriptions and donations has been very considerable; among which is most thankfully acknowledged, the liberal grant of 100*l.* voted in aid of our funds by the British and Foreign Bible Society.

"Since the beginning of July last, your Committee have procured from the Repository in London, 618 Bibles, and 1,108 New Testaments—the whole of which, with the exception of about twenty Bibles and a small portion of Testaments, have been disseminated—these few continue undisposed of, and an ample supply of large Bibles and Testaments, for which there seems to be a great demand, has been ordered from London and Edinburgh. A number of Bibles and Testaments have been given, by a vote of the Committee, to the unhappy convicts who sailed in the last fleet for Botany Bay.

"Your Committee cannot conclude their Report, without congratulating the Subscribers on the increased spirit of inquiry and thirst for religious knowledge, which the most accurate observers notice among the lower orders. Education is becoming more general—the means of acquiring information are more happily diffused. We

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hail these encouraging appearances, as indicating the dawn of civilization—as the bright harbinger of happier times than we have yet witnessed—as giving the early promise of a rich harvest of *Glory to God in the highest; on earth, Peace, Good-will towards men.*"

Scotland added considerably this year to the number and copiousness of her tributary streams. The zeal of the Kirk was honorably distinguished in this strife of Christian love; and the Presbyteries of Lanark, Paisley, and Ayr, followed the example of those which had before shewn their zeal for the Society, by general and productive contributions. The liberality displayed by the Presbytery of Glasgow in 1806, when a sum, amounting to 888*l.* 1*s.* 6*d.* was poured into the treasury of the Institution, was again roused into action; and the effect of the excitement was equally creditable to the donors, and beneficial to the object towards which their bounty was directed. After a solemn deliberation on the facts relative to the proceedings and operations of the Society, the Presbytery unanimously appointed an ANNUAL collection to be made in its behalf, at all the churches and chapels within its bounds, on or before the last Sabbath of July each year, till otherwise altered—a measure for which, it is said, *there was no precedent.*

Contributions in England, also, both congregational and individual, were manifestly on the

increase. A splendid part of their augmentation this year was formed by the aggregate of collections made through the several congregations in the connection of the late Rev. John Wesley, amounting to 1300*l.* Of the Rev. Dr. Adam Clarke, through whom this munificent donation was transmitted, something has already been said in another place; but the introduction of a subject in which the liberality of that body of Christians with which he stands particularly connected, is mentioned, affords a convenient opportunity of bearing testimony to their friendly regard for the prosperity of the Institution. This disposition was particularly manifested in the year 1807, when, on an application from the British and Foreign Bible Society, their Conference permitted Dr. Clarke to remain in the Metropolis, from which, by their regulations, he must otherwise have been removed; and thereby continued to the Society those literary services, the loss of which would have been most severely and injuriously felt.

For the acquisition of these, and many similar advantages, the British and Foreign Bible Society is indebted to that constitution of its Committee, which, by the diversity of its component parts, furnishes links of connection with almost every body of Christians throughout the Empire. In Joseph Butterworth, Esq.* the Society possessed,

* The present Member of Parliament for Coventry.

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from the period of its formation, a medium of acceptable and advantageous communication with the congregations already referred to; and the mention of his name, together with that of Thomas Allan, Esq. who entered more recently into the service of the Institution, will remind those who are acquainted with its practical business, of the candor, good sense, and integrity, evinced by those gentlemen, in the part they have severally taken in the administration of its concerns.

Along this tide of unexpected prosperity, the Society was carried to the celebration of its Fifth Anniversary. The Noble President, though laboring under the effects of a severe and protracted indisposition, appeared at his station in the Chair. With his usual felicity of selection and combination, his Lordship recited, in a well-digested Report, the principal transactions which had taken place, and which described the success that had attended the Institution in the course of the year. At the close of this recital, his Lordship exhorted the Members of the Society, in the words of the Report, not to consider their "field for exertion exhausted, while the inhabitants of any part of the globe, who are able to read the things belonging to their peace, were in want of its assistance." The sequel of the Report, as read by the Noble President, was particularly impressive.

"The Gospel of Salvation was a free, unmerited

boon to mankind; let us therefore rejoice, that, under Providence, we are become the honored instruments of its dispersion. It must be most gratifying to the Members of the Society, to receive applications for its aid and support, dictated by a spirit of Christian confidence and unity, from their fellow-laborers in the same cause, dispersed through various parts of the world: but it is still more gratifying to possess the disposition to comply with them, and the means of indulging that disposition to the most liberal extent. Let us therefore hope that neither will ever be wanting. Five years only have elapsed since the British and Foreign Bible Society was established; and, during that period, the calamities of war, from which Providence has mercifully protected our country, have been more or less felt in every kingdom of the Continent. But these calamities, even when they have operated with the greatest pressure, have not been able to extinguish that zeal which your Society had either kindled, or promoted, for the circulation of the Holy Scriptures: insomuch that the institution of the British and Foreign Bible Society has become a central point of union for individuals and societies animated with the same spirit, however variously circumstanced, or widely dispersed. Like a city set on a hill, it has become conspicuous; and the rays of light which have flowed from it, have

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been reflected with undiminished lustre. What success may attend the operations of the British and Foreign Bible Society, for improving the religious and moral state of mankind, cannot be ascertained. But surely it may be permitted to hope, that the blessing of God will not be wanting to an Institution which has for its single object, to promote His glory by the circulation of the Holy Scriptures; nor its endeavours in this line of duty be unattended with correspondent success. At present, the Members of the Society may be allowed to enjoy the gratification of knowing, that it has been the instrument of communicating the words of eternal life to cottages and prisons, to kindred and aliens, to the poor and the afflicted, in our own and foreign countries; and that, through its means, the people which sat in darkness have seen a great light, and to them which sat in the shadow of death, light is sprung up.

"Many tracts are yet unexplored; and it may be necessary to retrace some which have been already pursued: but, whatever the variety or extent of them may be, your Committee have the fullest reliance, that the zeal of the friends of religion will supply means adequate to increasing exigences. Nor can any inducement be wanting to those who remember the words of the prophet, peculiarly styled evangelical:— 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the

feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion,—Thy God reigneth!"—Isaiah liii. 7.

The Bishop of Durham, in moving thanks to the President, added a brief, but highly energetic address, concluding it with a prayer for the increased prosperity of the Institution. The liberal terms in which this prayer was expressed, and the feeling manner in which it was delivered, had the singular effect of drawing from the great body of the Members, as if actuated by one common impulse, an audible and emphatical, Amen.

Thus terminated the first lustrum of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Advancing from small and scarcely perceptible beginnings, it had now attained an extent, and reached an eminence, which could not fail to give it consideration in the eyes of mankind. The different portions of the United Kingdom had recognized it with approbation, and supported it with liberality. Establishments had arisen for the promotion of its object in three important stations on the European continent. Its excellence and utility had been proclaimed in India, and plans were forming there for bringing its operations to bear on the ignorance, superstition, and idolatry of the East. A footing had been obtained for it on the territories of the American States; and its entrance on the western hemisphere had been marked by

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all the signs and presages of prosperity and triumph. Its resources were considerable, as its works had been numerous: and there was every thing in its condition, both as it respected its domestic and its foreign connections, at the termination of its fifth year, to justify the assertion of the venerable Bishop Porteus, that "it was rising uniformly in reputation and credit; gaining new accessions of strength and revenue, and attaching to itself more and more the approbation and support of every real friend to the church, and to religion."

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

1809—10.

THE period at which we are now arrived, may be regarded as fixing a new era in the History of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

Hitherto we have seen the Institution relying, principally, for its encouragement and its resources, upon the countenance and support of individuals. In certain parts of the British empire, Associations were indeed formed; and to the funds derived from solitary contributions were added the more ample supplies of congregational and collective liberality. These Associations were, however, but few, and the aids they furnished were limited and precarious: the merits of the Society were, on the whole, but partially acknowledged; and its means, though considerable, were as yet inadequate and unsettled.

But the time was now come, when this state

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of doubtful recognition and precarious subsistence was to expire. The Society had passed through five years of exercise and probation; and the claims which it had established to respect and attachment, began now to be strongly and extensively felt. We are henceforth to see that feeling display itself in the progressive formation of auxiliary Establishments; and to witness the rise and the growth of a system of measures, which has given to the Society a decided character, and laid a solid foundation for its effectual and permanent support.

The dawn of that year whose transactions we are now to describe, was clouded by an event, in which the Society had to regret the loss of a zealous Patron; the Church of England, an exemplary Prelate; and, the cause of Christianity, a most active, vigilant, and liberal benefactor. The venerable Bishop Porteus, in whom these characters met, had, for some time past, given painful indications of a rapid tendency towards dissolution; and such was the debility to which his frame was reduced, that those who loved him most, and had the deepest interest in his detention upon earth, could scarcely refrain from breathing a prayer that his release might not be long delayed. Under all the infirmities of an exhausted constitution, his mind was sufficiently vigorous to occupy itself in contemplating with delight the progress of the British and

Foreign Bible Society,* and in projecting schemes for its further advancement. So strongly was the Bishop impressed by this latter consideration, that, within three weeks of his decease, he put himself to the exertion—and it was to him no

* The following extract from a Pamphlet, published by the Bishop a short time previously to his decease, will confirm what is said of the vigor of his Lordship's mind, and also of his persevering attachment to the British and Foreign Bible Society.

Urging upon the governors and proprietors of plantations in the British West India Islands, the adoption of his plan for educating their Negroes, the Bishop thus feelingly and eloquently addresses them.

" You will have the immortal honor of founding a *new school for piety and virtue* in the bosom of the Atlantic Ocean, of erecting a noble structure of religion and morality in the Western world, of exhibiting to mankind the interesting spectacle of a very large community of truly *Christian Negroes*, and of leading the way to the salvation of more than 500,000 human beings, immersed before in the grossest ignorance, superstition, wickedness, and idolatry, with all their countless descendants, to the end of time.

" Looking forward then, as I do, with some confidence to the accomplishment of this great event, it does, I confess, in some degree console and sustain my mind, amidst those frightful scenes that are now passing on every side of us, and those tremendous commotions which are convulsing to its centre almost the whole habitable globe. It will be one proof more, added to many others, of the high and exalted character of the British nation, and of the extent and grandeur of its views, beyond those of any other nation on the earth. While an immense gigantic power is spreading ruin, devastation, and the most complicated misery, over the world, subverting kingdoms, empires, and long-established governments, and bursting asunder all the most sacred bonds of

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ordinary exertion—of proceeding from London-House to Fulham, in order to suggest to the author the expediency of drawing up a summary of facts, with a view to make the nature and usefulness of the Society more extensively known.

On Saturday, the 6th of May, the author breakfasted with the Bishop, and had the mournful satisfaction of conversing with his Lordship for the last time. In this final interview, the author added to the account which he had transmitted to the Bishop, relative to the proceedings of the Fifth Anniversary, such further particulars as were calculated to interest and delight him.* The Bishop listened to the recital in an attitude of fixed attention; and then, with

civil and political Society; we see this small island, not only exerting itself with vigor in its own defence, and standing up single against the torrent that is overwhelming the whole continent of Europe, but at the same time silently and quietly providing for the future happiness of the human race, by diffusing every where the Holy Scriptures, and thereby sowing the seeds of Christianity over every quarter of the globe."

Letter to the Governors, Legislatures, and Proprietors of Plantations in the British West Indian Islands, p. 28.

* It was at this interview that the Bishop expressed to the author his intention of presenting the Society with a donation of 50*l.* The death of the Bishop taking place speedily after, the author communicated the circumstance to his Lordship's executors, who, very honorably, gave effect to the Bishop's dying intention by a donation to that amount.

much earnestness, exclaimed: "Get the summary of facts completed as speedily as possible; and," (raising his voice,) "CIRCULATE IT WIDELY."

The Bishop afterwards adverted to the improved state of religion in our own country more particularly, and generally throughout the world; and dwelt much on the good effects produced by Dr. Buchanan's "Star in the East:" adding, with great emphasis, "The Star in the East has done wonders!" The author reminded his Lordship that the Bible Society, and the translations in India, had made considerable progress; "Oh, yes," (exclaimed the Bishop, lifting up his emaciated hands,) "the Bible Society, and the translations in the East, will bring about glorious days!" While he uttered these words, or words to this effect, his morbid frame seemed to undergo a sudden re-animation: the small remains of blood in his system appeared to have collected in that countenance always the seat of benignity, and now rendered more benign than ever. The glow, the smile, the visible ecstasy, which accompanied the delivery of this oracular sentiment, (for such it has proved to have been,) were all characteristic of the dying saint; and portended the near approach of that event which on the ensuing Saturday terminated his conflict with mortality, and removed his spirit to that region where "the souls

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of the faithful, when delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity."*

The decease of an individual who united, in so eminent a degree, some of the best qualities of the Prelate, the Philanthropist, and the Christian, was deservedly regarded as a general calamity. In that calamity, no part of the Chris-

* The author trusts, he shall be excused for extracting a passage from his Speech at the first Anniversary of the Hackney Society; (Dec. 13, 1813,) as the above account will show the ground he had for the earnestness and decision with which he expressed himself on that occasion.

"I confess, for my own part, I feel a growing attachment to the cause, under all the circumstances of fatigue, perplexity, and sacrifice, to which it exposes me; and I am desirous to promote its interest, both locally and generally, by all the exertions which it is in my power to command. I owe this zeal and constancy, not more to the intrinsical excellence of the Institution itself, than to the solemn injunctions of that amiable Prelate, now counted with the spirits of just men made perfect; under whose auspices I entered, and for more than five years continued in its service. I will not presume to say, what would be the sentiments of the enlightened Prelate, were he now upon earth; but I very well know what his sentiments were while upon earth, and in the moments which nearly preceded his removal to heaven. With his dying accents, and, with a glow on his countenance which I shall never forget, he admonished me to give to the plans of the Society the widest possible circulation; and I should be unworthy of the confidence with which he honored me while living, and of the satisfaction with which I cherish his image now that he is no more, if I did not derive from such a memorial, an additional motive for adherence to a cause in which I have had the honor to labor for nearly ten years, and in the service of which, I hope, by the blessing of God, to be found faithful unto death."

tian public bore a larger share than the conductors and the members of the British and Foreign Bible Society. The sense of their loss was very suitably expressed in the Report which detailed the transactions of the year; and with that official tribute the author will take his leave of this affecting subject.

"On this occasion it is impossible to pass unnoticed an event which has filled your Committee with the deepest regret, the death of one of the Vice-Presidents of the Society, the lamented and most respected late Bishop of London. They are persuaded that every Member of the Institution will cordially sympathize with them on this expression of their feelings, as a tribute no less due to the public and private virtues of that venerable Prelate, than to the station which he held in this Society."*

The close of the last year had been distinguished, as the reader will recollect, by the formation at Reading of the first Auxiliary Bible Society, under the patronage of the Bishop of Salisbury, a Vice-President of the Parent Institution, and Bishop of the diocese within which the new Establishment was situated. Two days subsequent to this event, (viz. on the 30th of March,) a similar Institution was established at Nottingham, under the designation of "The Bible Society of Nottingham and its Vicinity."

* Sixth Report.

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The impulse was now given; and exertions were made by the friends of the Society in different parts of the country, to excite the towns and vicinities with which they were severally connected to an imitation of the examples which Reading and Nottingham had so laudably set. The effect of this impulse, and of the active measures to which it led, very satisfactorily appeared in the addition of eleven Auxiliary Societies to the two which had been formed before the expiration of the preceding year. The order of their formation was as follows:

"The Edinburgh Bible Society" was instituted on the 31st of July, 1809; that of "Newcastle-upon-Tyne"* on the 30th of March: that of "East Lothian" followed on the 4th, and of "Leeds" on the 25th of October; the latter commemorating, by the day of its formation, the Jubilee of our amiable but afflicted Monarch. "Exeter" stood forth on the 8th of December, and closed the list of Auxiliaries for the year 1809. "Manchester" took the lead in 1810; the Society for that town and its associate "Salford," having been formed on the 4th of January. "Kendal" followed on the 5th of the same month. The 1st of February was signalized by the institution of the "Bristol"

* This was formed under the immediate patronage of the Bishop of Durham.

Society, the 5th by that of the "Sheffield," and the 19th of the "Leicester." "Hull," on the 4th of April, added the eleventh Auxiliary Society, the last which was formed previously to the Sixth Anniversary of the Parent Institution.

From this numerical statement it will appear, that the British and Foreign Bible Society attained considerable growth in the course of that year which we are now recording, and that much must by consequence have been added to its general reputation, and to its active and financial resources. But in order to form a just estimate of the influence, the property, and the active co-operation, which accrued to the Society from the Auxiliaries which have now been enumerated, it would be necessary to unfold the process by which they were severally formed; and to analyse their composition with a degree of exactness, which obscurity in some cases, and delicacy in others, would render it equally difficult and imprudent to attempt. It may not, however, be amiss to mention a few particulars, in reference to some of these Establishments; from which the reader may obtain a clearer apprehension of the manner in which they were brought about and of the support which they lent, by the very circumstance of their formation, to the character and the interest of the Parent Institution.

The first five of the Auxiliary Societies which have been described, appear to have risen al-

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together from local and insulated exertion: they were not, at least, indebted for their production, so far as the author knows, or has been able to learn, to any efforts or communications issuing from the conductors of the Parent Society. Of the others, the Societies at Kendal, Leicester, and Hull, were, with some qualification, particularly as it respects the last, substantially of the same description. But in the formation of those at Manchester, Bristol, and Sheffield,* there were circumstances which, through all their stages, from their origin to their completion, connected them with the Officers of the Parent Society, and especially with him on whom, both from professional and official obligations, it devolved more particularly to attend to the interest and the influence of the National Church. In the measures which conduced to the establishment of the Societies under consideration, that Officer was called to take a part which involved no little anxiety, labor, and responsibility. The assistance of his colleagues was principally rendered at the meetings convened for the formation of each: and the services of all were uniformly attested by a public and recorded acknowledgment.

It has been observed in general, that the leading advantages derived to the British and Foreign Bible Society, from the accession of these

* Vide Proceedings at Manchester, Bristol, and Sheffield.

Auxiliary Establishments, were public recognition and permanent support. The former was an advantage of the greatest importance, as it rescued the character of the Society from suspicion, and placed its claims, so far as the influence of that recognition extended, beyond the reach of impeachment or contradiction. The publicity of the meetings in which the Auxiliary Societies were formed, the consideration of the persons under whose direction or patronage those meetings were held, the recorded approval of the object, constitution, and proceedings of the Parent Society,* and the notification of the entire transaction, through channels of general communication, placed the Institution, in whose favor all these steps were taken, upon the highest ground; and gave to its merits the benefit of a most deliberate and unequivocal attestation.

The value of this recognition was also, in some of the instances already specified, considerably increased by the formal manner in which the

* The following Rules, extracted from the Bristol Resolutions, were generally, either literally or substantially, adopted at the formation of every Auxiliary Bible Society:

"I. That the object, the constitution, and the proceedings of the British and Foreign Bible Society, have the cordial approbation of this Meeting.

"II. That a Society be formed in this city for the purpose of aiding and co-operating with the British and Foreign Bible Society, in the dissemination of the Holy Scriptures, both at home and abroad."

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Society was recommended to local support, and by the authority of the parties from whom the recommendation proceeded. Such was the case in the proceedings adopted at Manchester, for the establishment of an Auxiliary in that place. A week preceding the day of meeting, (viz. Dec. 28, 1809,) an advertisement, declaratory of the sentiments and intentions of those who subscribed it, was officially inserted in the Manchester Papers, and circulated besides in such other ways as might ensure it the greatest publicity.

This advertisement opened with the address from the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society, to which was annexed the following notice:

"Whereas applications have come, addressed to several respectable Inhabitants of this Town and Neighbourhood, from the above Society, the design of which applications is to promote the extension of its noble and truly benevolent objects, by the formation of an Auxiliary Society in the Town of Manchester, after the example of Dublin, Edinburgh, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Birmingham, Leeds, and other principal towns in the United Kingdom.

"We, the undersigned, being well persuaded that the designs of the above Society are eminently pure and universal, independent of all considerations of sect or party, and calculated to advance the true interest and eternal happiness

of mankind—Do hereby request the notice of the Public to a proposal, promising to extend so great advantages and blessings to the people of this country, and to foreign lands; and beg leave earnestly to invite all those who may be friendly to the cause, to meet at the Police-Office, on Thursday next, the 4th day of January, 1810, at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, for the purpose of taking the application from the British and Foreign Bible Society into consideration, and adopting such measures as shall appear most advisable in the judgment of the Meeting."

Among the signatures to this instrument, which composed a numerous list of Clergy, Dissenting Ministers, &c. were the following:

Rev. Dr. Blackburn, Warden of Manchester.
Rev. John Gatliffe,
Rev. Charles Ethelston,
Rev. Croxton Johnston,
Rev. John Clowes,
} Fellows of the Collegiate Church.
Rev. H. V. Bayley, Sub-Dean of Lincoln.
Rev. E. Booth, Minister of St. Stephen's.
Rev. John Clowes, Minister of St. John's.
Rev. S. Hall, Minister of St. Peter's.
Rev. Jeremiah Smith, Head Master of the Free Grammar School.
Rev. Robert Tweddell, Minister of Ardwick.
Boroughreeve and Constables of Manchester.
Boroughreeve and Constables of Salford, &c. &c.

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Similar formalities were observed in the preparatory measures adopted for the establishment of the Bristol Society, but on a scale which rendered the influence of their testimony to the merits of the Parent Institution still more effectual and complete. The Bishop of the diocese appeared on this occasion, as the original mover and the leader of the business, by issuing, in his pastoral capacity, a circular letter to the Clergy, of which the following is a copy:

"Reverend Sir,

"Having been requested by the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society, to recommend the formation of an Auxiliary Society in the City of Bristol, similar to those which have been established in several great towns throughout the kingdom; I beg leave to state, that such a measure has my hearty approbation, and that it will afford me the greatest pleasure to see it carried into execution.

I am,
Reverend Sir,
Yours faithfully,
W. BRISTOL."

Trinity College, Cambridge,
Jan. 9, 1810.

The receipt of this circular was followed, as its immediate effect, by a requisition to the

Mayor to convene a Public Meeting, signed by twenty-seven Clergymen, the greater number of whom were beneficed, and by the most respectable Dissenting Ministers and Laity of Bristol. These documents, together with the Mayor's acquiescence and appointment of a Meeting at the Guildhall, "for the purpose of considering the best mode of promoting the great objects of the British and Foreign Bible Society," were publicly advertised; and formed the authority under which was constituted "The Bristol Auxiliary Bible Society." In the present instance, therefore, the highest ecclesiastical and civil functionaries were seen, for the first time, to concur, in accrediting the character of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and in affixing mutually their seal to its excellence and utility, by measures of the greatest deliberation, solemnity, and decision.

It is further to be observed, that, in the formation of these, and of other Auxiliary Societies, the progress from the commencement to the consummation frequently exhibited a transition from improbability and embarrassment to certainty and triumph. In not a few instances which might be cited, the solitary individual, or the associated few, who had conceived the design of forming an Auxiliary Society, embarked in the enterprise, with little more to encourage them than the consciousness of the rectitude of

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their intentions, and the utility of their object. Though environed with difficulties, and counteracted by opposition, they maintained their course without yielding to despair, till, by a concurrence of circumstances, often as unexpected as it was advantageous, they were permitted to witness the fulfilment of their wishes and the answer to their prayers, in the complete success of their humble but persevering exertions.*

Nor is it immaterial to observe, that the honor of producing these Auxiliary Societies neither has been, nor, from a variety of circumstances, can be, distinctly awarded. In some cases, the original authors of the elementary movements were of a condition in life, in others, of a denomination in religion, which, had the parties appeared with any ostensible prominence, might have excited a prejudice, unreasonable indeed, but not the less injurious to the undertaking, and have thrown serious impediments in the way of its success. With a degree of forbearance, therefore, which cannot be too highly commended, they chose a station of unobserved, but effectual co-

* In the number of those to whom these observations apply, the author cannot forbear particularizing the Rev. R. Tweddell, of Manchester, and Mr. Thomas Richardson, of Bristol. From a very early and frequent correspondence with these gentlemen, the author had opportunities, peculiar to himself, of knowing how much the formation of the Manchester and Bristol Societies was indebted to their judicious and patient exertions.

operation: and provided they might but touch in concealment the springs of action, and promote exertions in others, they resigned contentedly the honors of public distinction, to those who could wear them without prejudice, or, as it happened in most cases, with advantage, to the common cause.

Such a conduct, it is obvious, must have involved considerable sacrifices of personal feeling. It argued the preponderance of a generous concern for the welfare of the Institution over every consideration of selfishness or vanity; and evinced, how deeply an attachment to its interests was radicated in the sentiments and the affections of its promoters.

But it is time to return to the narrative.

While the Institution was thus advancing by the formation of Auxiliary Societies at home, its progress was marked by a very gratifying extension of its labors and its connections abroad.

Commencing with Bâsle, we find the Bible Society established at that place, in full activity, and engaging successively in new and more extensive operations. By the aid which its conductors derived from the British and Foreign Bible Society, they proceeded to print a second, and a third, edition of the German Bible, and to stock their depository, by purchase, with large supplies of French Bibles and Testaments. Both the German and the French Scriptures were rapidly disposed of; and the latter obtained so

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ready an acceptance in the southern and south-east provinces of France, that while the Protestants, as was natural, received them with joy, many Roman Catholics voluntarily applied for copies, and were afterwards found to have perused them with eagerness and gratitude.

Under the auspices of this Society, and with proportional assistance from the Parent Institution in London, a company of active Christians at Bâsle had projected, in 1808, an edition of the New Testament in the Romanese language, for the benefit of the Mountaineers inhabiting the Grisons, among whom the Sacred Scriptures, (to which this people were religiously attached,) had become extremely scarce, and in some cases almost unattainable. Of the Romanese language, it appeared, there were two distinct dialects, denominated severally the Churwelsche and the Ladiniche. It was in the first of these dialects that the edition alluded to, was designed to be printed; and upon its completion, early in 1810, the poor Mountaineers, for whose use it was intended, expressed their satisfaction by strong demonstrations of gratitude and joy. The effect of this intelligence upon the other division of this interesting people was such, as to create further employment for the benevolent feelings in which this work of kindness had originated. For " when the poor Ladins, who border upon Italy, heard what a treasure their

neighbours on the Tyrolese frontiers had got, they expressed a very strong desire to be favored with a similar boon; and the result was a determination, both in Bâsle and in London, to gratify this desire, and to give to the whole Romanese nation the means of reading, in their own tongues, the wonderful works of God.

In connection with the proceedings of the Bâsle Society, it may not be improper to advert to the progress of an Institution, excited by its example, previously to its transfer from Nurenberg to Bâsle—the Catholic Bible Society at Ratisbon. The spirit in which this Institution was founded, and the pious zeal with which it was promoted, gave early promise of those fruits which it has since so abundantly produced. Though projected only in July, 1808, so rapidly did its labors advance, that, by the month of October, 1809, notwithstanding the great difficulty to which such an undertaking on the part of members of the Roman Catholic persuasion would be exposed, two large editions of the Bible (a Bible approved by Protestants themselves) had been disposed of, and a third was nearly completed. These copies had been largely and most acceptably distributed in Austria, Bavaria, and Switzerland; many Catholic Clergymen publicly recommended the perusal of them from their pulpits; and Professor Sailer, an eminent scholar and divine, after pronouncing in a sermon de-

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livered at Landshut, in Bavaria, a warm eulogium on this best of all books, added: "The Bible is now read by students, by the people, and even by children."

The Society at Berlin, under all the difficulties with which it had to struggle, continued to maintain its laudable exertions in preparing the large edition of the Scriptures, upon which it had entered in the preceding year, for the service of the Polish Christians. The British and Foreign Bible Society, with a parental solicitude, watched over the movements of this meritorious Society, while persevering in its works of benevolence under circumstances of almost unexampled embarrassment; and enabled it by a loan, most seasonably granted, to resume its suspended exertions, and to prosecute its arduous undertaking with renewed alacrity, and eventual success.

But it is to Sweden that we are to look for the brightest display of vigor and zeal during this and the succeeding year. Encouraged by the cheering address and pecuniary grants of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Stockholm Evangelical Society embarked in its undertaking for printing the Swedish Scriptures on standing types, with a degree of spirit and of perseverance, which enabled it to issue, in little more than eighteen months from the commencement of its labors, a most interesting and satis-

factory Report. The train of facts which succeeded each other, from the dawn of this Society's operations in the Summer of 1809, to the maturity which they had acquired at the close of 1810, will justify the author in anticipating in this place the substance of that valuable Report. Prompted by a desire to supply the lower orders in Sweden with the Holy Scriptures, and animated in their work by the spontaneous and liberal co-operation of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Evangelical Society speedily produced their first edition of the Swedish New Testament. This was followed by two more editions in the course of the same year; insomuch, that by the close of 1810, more than 11,000 copies of the New Testament had been issued, and a resolution formed to print the Old Testament: and all this, it is to be observed, was done in a country, and for the benefit of a people, which had been considered to be so generally furnished with the Bible, that "no want" was believed to exist among them "of that holy book." *

Another object which occupied the concern of the Stockholm Society, was the superintendance of an edition of the New Testament in the dialect of Lapland. To this interesting consideration the attention of the British and Foreign Bible Society

* Page 114.

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had been directed, by their indefatigable correspondents, Messrs. Paterson and Henderson, in the Autumn of 1808; and the Society had been induced, on their representation, to appropriate the sum of 50*l.* to an edition of 5000 copies, for distribution in Norwegian, Russian, and Swedish Lapland. On the formation of the Evangelical Society at Stockholm, the execution of this work was consigned to their care: and the following extract from their Report, as above-described, will show, how cheerfully they accepted the charge, and with what a lively interest they attended to its performance.

"Within the boundaries of Sweden, but far in the north, dwell a people called Laplanders; their language is totally distinct, and their mode of living, and advance in cultivation, very far behind that of the inhabitants of Sweden; nor did the light of the Gospel approach their frozen regions, for ages after it had illuminated our nation. Within the two last centuries, the Kings of Sweden have turned their thoughts for good towards that nation. Yet there is still a great want of Bibles, Common Prayer Books, Catechisms, and Religious Tracts, among them. A venerable man, Dr. Nordin, Bishop of Hernosand, to whose diocese Lapland belongs, purposely set up a printing press at ernosand, to remedy, as well as he could, this deficiency: but it must be noticed, to the honor of the British and Foreign

Bible Society in London, that here again did their unbounded Christian love step in, to send forth, upon easy terms, light and knowledge to those who sit in darkness. They have undertaken to bear the cost of an edition of 5000 New Testaments, of which 25 sheets are already come from the press. Their directors prescribe, that these 5000 copies should be distributed under the superintendance of our Committee, and among the three nations of Laplanders subject to Sweden, Russia, and Norway: which delightful task the Committee have undertaken with much pleasure."

As the proceedings of the Stockholm Society, down to the close of 1810, have been generally stated, it may not be amiss to advert more particularly to the tenor of that Report, already in part anticipated, in which those proceedings are more particularly detailed. It is not compatible with the limits of this History, to cite largely from the numerous documents which enrich, as well as authenticate, the Annual Reports of the British and Foreign Bible Society. In general, it must suffice to glance at them cursorily, and refer the reader for more full information to the records in which they are contained. There is, however, in the First Report of the Stockholm Evangelical Society, so much simplicity, good sense, and genuine piety, as to give it a claim to special attention. The Report opens with happy abruptness, in these words of inspiration :

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"O God, send out thy light and thy truth!" It then proceeds as follows;—"To make known more and more the truth here referred to, is, and shall continue to be, the grand aim of this Society. We do not wish to strip the arts and sciences, or the knowledge and wisdom of man, of their important value: no, we thank God for their usefulness, and we hail with delight every discovery that removes or softens in any degree the sorrows and sufferings of mortality; or which, in social life, comforts man, or endears him more and more to man as his brother. But we dare not forget, that all these advantages have the narrow circle of time drawn round them: they end with our lives.

"But the truth which comes from above, embraces eternity. It looks to Jehovah as its origin, and raises man from earth to heaven. This truth is revealed and explained in the Bible.

"An ardent desire to render Bibles plentiful, and easy to be obtained, in the dear land of our nativity, was coeval with the first idea of this Institution; and it is still our grand aim: but the difficulties of our commencement, and the want of means for an undertaking so expensive, left this patriotic desire as it were dormant, till the goodness of God, in his own time, opened a way for its gratification."

"I will take upon myself to say, that the Committee could not have ventured upon this expensive undertaking, for some time at least, had

it not been for the noble benevolence of a foreign nation.

"England exhibits to the world a delightful assembly of sincere and zealous friends to the Gospel of Christ, who, notwithstanding their diversity of views upon the minor objects of religion, have found in the Bible a sure and harmonious centre, whence they are agreed conjointly to labor, in spreading far and near that light which shines more and more unto the perfect day. It is from principles like these, and from a love to the doctrine of Jesus, that a liberality arose, which, unsolicited, stretched forth a helping hand. A Society in London, called the British and Foreign Bible Society, made us a present of 300*l.* sterling, that our poor might know more of the doctrine of Christ: and, finding that this went but a small way in a great work, trebled it; yes, trebled it, to their everlasting praise and honor.

"This gave life to our hopes of obtaining, what we so much required—cheap editions of the Word of God in Swedish. We could now, by advertisements, call on every lover of God in Sweden to come and do likewise. The call has been answered; and, as far as could be expected in these times of tribulation, the Swedish public have manifested an ardent desire to throw their mite into this heavenly treasury.

"The list of Swedish subscribers to this glorious book contains persons of all ranks, from the

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first noblemen and dignitaries in the land down to the poorest servants—persons who agree with us in thinking, that the highest act of benevolence which man can show to his fellow, is, to open to him an opportunity of reading the Bible; a book, which is a sure guide to endless happiness, an inexhaustible fountain of divine wisdom, an unerring touchstone whereby to determine—What is truth."

After stating the manner, in which the funds have been expended, the number of copies of the Scriptures which have been printed in the Swedish language, and the distribution made, both of them and of certain Finnish Testaments purchased with part of their funds, the Report proceeds to detail what had been done by the British and Foreign Bible Society for the Laplanders, (as quoted above,) and then concludes in the following very pious and impresive manner:

"Finally, we bow our knees, under the deepest sense of gratitude to the Father of mercies, for his unspeakable goodness in bestowing upon our Society so many signal instances of favor, blessing, and success. We feel deeply humbled when we consider the demerit of the instruments made use of by his grace, and the splendor of the work committed to them—to spread abroad his light and his truth. But the cause is God's; Jesus is our Master; who has said: 'Behold, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world."

Among the advantages of anticipating a Report which properly belongs to the ensuing year, not the least is that which we derive from being thus made acquainted with the real character of the Stockholm Evangelical Society. It is scarcely possible to inspect this Report, without receiving a very favorable impression of the individuals from whom it proceeded, and regarding their Association as eminently calculated to advance the object for which it was formed. We see in its members a body of men, not exhibiting a show of exertion, or indolently reposing on the gratuitous aid of a foreign nation, but fully alive to the calls of duty, and sincerely intent upon employing the liberality of others as a stimulus to awaken their own energies, and to promote among their countrymen a similar spirit of activity and zeal.

It were unjust to overlook what is due to Messrs. Paterson and Henderson, for their discreet and persevering exertions in aid of the Stockholm Society, during this first and most trying period of its labors. The spirit of these active and devoted correspondents may be learnt from their letter of acknowledgment in reply to a Resolution of Thanks transmitted to them in the summer of 1809. Their conduct and success since the date of that letter will give a particular interest to the following extract:

"It is peculiarly valuable to us, as we consider

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it as a pledge, that you will in future make use of our services in promoting your glorious design, wherever God may be pleased to cast our lot. We want words to express our gratitude; but we hope you will give us new opportunities to testify it by our actions. Be assured, that nothing will be esteemed a greater favor by us, than that you would have the goodness to command our services. These you may consider as at your disposal; and we beg of you freely to tell us, in what manner we can most effectually promote the views of the Society. In promoting your views, we consider ourselves as promoting the cause of God and of Christ, to whose service we have entirely dedicated ourselves. It now appears to us to be our Saviour's will, that we should serve him on the continent of Europe; and as soon as we have completed what we have begun in the North, we hope you will inform us where you think we could be of most use to the Society."

The Roman Catholic Bible Society at Ratisbon appears also by this time to have attained considerable strength and celebrity. It will be recollected that the foundation of this Society was laid by Regens Wittman, in 1806. Through many difficulties the plan of printing by standing types was carried into execution; and in 1808 appeared the first edition of the New Testament. The version adopted, though generally conformed to the Vul-

gate, was said to be on the whole a faithful translation from the original Greek, and in all essential and fundamental points strictly correct.

Such was the progress made by the cause of the British and Foreign Bible Society, on the continent of Europe, down to the period which terminated the sixth year of its establishment. The quantity of effect from the three Societies at Bâsle, Berlin, and Stockholm, (not to mention the exertions in inferior stations,) must on the whole have been great; and a large proportion of it was produced (it should be observed) under all the difficulties and discouragements of an extensive and devastating war. This consideration, while it greatly enhances the value of what was accomplished, leaves the mind in doubt, whether more to regret the existence of the obstacles, or to admire the energy by which they were surmounted.

But it is time that we direct our attention to that field of usefulness which had been opened to the Society, in the preceding year, beyond the Atlantic, and which already exhibited such satisfactory evidences of an improved and still improving cultivation.

The Philadelphia Bible Society abundantly justified, by its zeal and success, the high expectations which its commencement had excited. In their First Report, (which was dated May 1, 1809,) the Managers state, that "the necessity for

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such an Institution had appeared much more evident to them since, in the course of their duty, they had been led to make particular inquiries into the poorer class of people in Philadelphia, than it ever did before." "The deficiency of Bibles" (they say) "has been found to be much greater than was expected; and it is believed to be as great in many other places. The number of families and individuals who are destitute of a copy of the Scriptures, is so considerable, that the whole of the funds in the possession of the Society could be profitably expended in supplying the wants of this city alone; and the opportunities of distributing them in other places are so numerous, that, if these funds were tenfold as great as they are, they would be still inadequate to supply the demand."

The *direct* good produced by the Institution is asserted in confident terms. "Some hundreds of families" (say the Managers) "are now in possession of a Bible, by means of the Society, which never had one before: and it deserves to be mentioned, that the books have commonly been received with emotion, and strong indications of gratitude; and that the application for them is often earnest and pressing."

"But, beside the good resulting from the promotion of the chief and direct object of the Society," the Managers express it as their opinion, that "very important and desirable effects would

be *indirectly* promoted by their Association." "The cordiality and harmony with which Christians of so many denominations have united in prosecuting this important object, cannot fail" (they observe) "of being attended with some good effect on all concerned. It is an approximation to that unity and brotherly love among Christians, which all good men so ardently desire. At least, it will have a tendency to remove prejudices, by promoting mutual acquaintance between the members of different religious communities."

"The Managers" (they add) "do moreover believe, that the zeal discovered, and efforts made, by so many persons in this city, of different conditions and professions, to furnish the poor with Bibles gratuitously, will have a happy tendency to induce many to appreciate the Sacred Scriptures more highly than they have been wont to do; and may dispose those who possess Bibles, but have suffered them to lie neglected in their houses, to peruse them with serious attention."

Such an example as that of the Philadelphia Bible Society could not fail to produce a salutary influence on the inhabitants of the surrounding States. The effect of that influence was speedily manifested in the appearance of kindred establishments: six were formed in the course of the present year, viz. the Connecticut Bible Society at

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Harford, the Massachusetts at Boston, the New Jersey at Princeton; and three at New York, under the respective designations of, "The New York Bible Society," "The Young Men's Bible Society," and "The New York Bible and Common Prayer Book Society."

The last of these, instituted under the auspices of the late Bishop Moore, and the Protestant Episcopal Clergy of New York, was introduced to the notice of the British and Foreign Bible Society by a respectful letter from its Right Reverend President, accompanied with a request of such aid as the Society might see expedient to grant. The case was not without a precedent: the Stockholm Evangelical Society had another object, beside the circulation of the Scriptures; and the separation of the former from the latter, which characterized the Society at Stockholm, was found, on examination, to have been provided for in the constitution of the Bible and Common Prayer Book Society at New York. A grant was therefore made to its funds upon the scale which had regulated the grants made to the other Trans-Atlantic Societies. In the present instance, however, the pecuniary donation was commuted for Bibles and Testaments to the stipulated amount; a distinction by which the conductors of the British and Foreign Bible Society considered themselves as unequivocally evincing a disposition to co-operate, as far as might be con-

sistent, with religious Institutions of every kind, without dissembling their preference of Societies constituted on principles in all respects analogous to their own.

It may be satisfactory to add, that the Bibles and Testaments to which reference has been made, and which amounted in value to 100*l.* were regularly transmitted; and, though, from the indisposition and subsequent death of Bishop Moore, their acknowledgment was delayed, it was made, in the year 1814, by the Bishop's successor in the Presidency, the Right Reverend Dr. Hobart, with warm expressions of gratitude and respect.

The rapid increase of Bible Societies in the United States of America, their public recognition of the British and Foreign Bible Society, as their prototype and common parent, together with their grateful acceptance of its pecuniary aid, as well as of its friendship and general co-operation, proclaim, in the strongest manner, the growth of that interest in favor of the common object, which had been so happily excited in the regions beyond the Atlantic. Such distinguished success in a quarter with which a connection had been so recently formed, was regarded by the conductors of the British and Foreign Bible Society as an event of no ordinary importance; and they received, from time to time, the intelligence of its progress, with emotions which indicated their joy

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in the present effects, and their anticipation of still greater and more satisfactory results.

In these feelings the Philadelphia Bible Society, to whose steady example and stimulating appeals so much of this success is to be ascribed, appeared most warmly to participate; and the sentiments expressed by its Managers, at the close of the Report before cited, coincide so perfectly with the view which has been taken of the Trans-Atlantic operations, and have been so completely justified by subsequent experience, that they deserve to be placed upon record.

"The institution of a Bible Society in this place, must be considered an auspicious event; and the Managers do not think that their hopes are too sanguine, when they persuade themselves, that, at no very distant period, this Society will be found in the foremost rank among those Institutions which piety or humanity has erected for the relief of the indigent, on this continent. And they conclude this Report, by declaring it to be the object, not only of their prayers, but of their hopes, that before the present generation shall have passed away, the Holy Scriptures will be read by all the principal nations under heaven, and thus the way be opened for the fulfilment of the prediction of the prophet, 'The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the seas.'"

So much may suffice to represent the condition of the Society's affairs on the continents of Europe and America. Its proceedings in India may be advantageously reserved for the next chapter, when an opportunity will be afforded of exhibiting them in a more connected form, and in a state more nearly approaching to maturity and completion.

It will now be proper to return to the Domestic department, on which something has already been said; and to review more particularly the transactions at home, during a year so prolific in exertions among confederated Christians abroad.

It will naturally be supposed, that the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society, while extending the most encouraging assurances of sympathy and aid to the inhabitants of other countries, would not remain indifferent to the wants and the petitions of their own. Impressed with a desire of gratifying the wish to possess the Scriptures, which appeared to be manifestly on the increase throughout the country, the Committee gave a cordial reception to every application which came within the provisions of their constitution, and the rules of their practice; and afforded, as the circumstances of the case required, a proportional degree of accommodation and relief.

Among the various ways through which the distribution of the Scriptures for the native population of Great Britain was promoted, that of

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charitable Institutions, whether constituted for religious or temporal objects, formed a principal medium, at the period now under consideration. In some instances, the conductors of these Institutions were solicited to perform this service, but in the greater number they were themselves the suitors. However that may be, it is certain that, through these channels, a considerable stock of English and Welsh Bibles and Testaments were put into immediate, and, it is believed, judicious circulation.

It was also in the course of this year that a resolution was adopted to print a portion of the Scriptures in the native Irish language. On the expediency of this measure, which occupied the attention of the Society at an early stage of its establishment, great diversity of opinion was found to prevail on each side of the Channel; and to this conflict of sentiment, and contrariety of information, it must be ascribed, that the language of the Society, in its Annual Reports, was at different periods so various, and, in some cases, even contradictory. Not to detain the reader on a subject to which there may be occasion again to advert, it will be sufficient to observe, that, after a discussion, alternately suspended and renewed during a period of nearly five years, and a correspondence of considerable extent, with prelates, scholars, and public bodies, in Ireland, it was finally determined that

the experiment should be tried; and an order was accordingly given, that an edition of the New Testament, amounting to 2000 copies, conformably to the accredited version of Bishop Bedell,* should immediately be put to press. It may not be amiss to add, in general terms, that the experiment was found to answer, greatly beyond the hopes which had been formed of its success, and that the result of it encouraged the Society to repeat the trial on a much larger scale, and with more ample means of ascertaining its real effect.

While the Committee were prosecuting these labors, with particular reference to the native population of the United Kingdom, they were not less occupied in planning, and laboring for, the spiritual benefit of foreigners, either resident among them, or inhabiting countries, near or remote, with whose wants they had been made incidentally acquainted.

* The New Testament was first translated into the native Irish in 1602, by Dr. Daniel, afterwards Archbishop of Tuam. It was printed in 4to in the Irish character. The Old Testament was translated by Dr. Bedell, Bishop of Kilmore, and Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, as early as 1640; but from want of means to print it, or some other cause, it remained in MS. above forty years. The Hon. Robert Boyle, who had reprinted the Testament of Dr. Daniel, brought forward also this MS. translation of the Old by Bishop Bedell. Through his exertions an edition of it was printed, and 500 copies were distributed gratis. It ought to be added, that Mr. Boyle contributed to both these undertakings the sum of 700*l.*

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An inspection of the Annual Reports will show with what promptitude and munificence the Society stretched out its hands to the east, and the west; to the north, and the south; and dispensed the sacred treasures which it had accumulated by indefatigable exertions, to the spiritually indigent in every part of the world.

Among the persons of this description to whom the Society obtained an introduction in the course of this year, were, the several congregations formed by the Moravian Brethren, (men of primitive simplicity, devotion, and perseverance,) in South Africa, the West Indies, and North America. For this introduction the Society was indebted to the Rev. C. J. Latrobe, Secretary to the Brethren's Missions; whose interesting appeals on behalf of his charge, as published in the Appendix to the Society's Reports, supersede the necessity of any eulogium on his talents, his zeal, and his piety.

Among the first fruits of this connection, was an edition of the Gospel of St. John in the Esquimaux language, at the Society's expense; and an engagement to print that of St. Luke, when the translation should be completed, for the use of the converted Esquimaux on the coast of Labrador.

A difficulty occurred in the course of this undertaking, which gave the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society another opportunity of testifying their vigilant and zealous regard for the simple object of their Institution.

By a practice, in general use among the Brethren's congregations, a translation had been made of a Harmony of the Scriptures, into the language of the Esquimaux; and the petition of their Secretary was, that this Harmony might be printed, for their benefit, at the Society's expense. To this proposition the Committee objected; considering any mode of printing the Scriptures, but that which exhibited them as they stood in the Canon, to be a deviation from the letter and the spirit of their Institution. In this view of the subject the Brethren acquiesced; and accordingly engaged to conform their translation to the standard as generally received. A similar exception had been previously taken against the form of a Harmony, in the Calmuc version, when proposed by the Missionaries at Sarepta; and it was attended with a similar result. These facts are mentioned, in order to show, with what scrupulous exactness the conductors of the British and Foreign Bible Society maintained the observance of their fundamental regulations; and how carefully they abstained from any measures, however speciously recommended, which might be likely to betray them into deflection and error.

Another medium of distribution, which appears for the first time in the proceedings of this year, was that of a female correspondent, occupying a station of considerable rank and influence

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in a sea-port, and distinguished for her piety and her zeal in promoting the best interests of mankind. Through this important channel Bibles and Testaments in various languages were dispersed, as advantageous opportunities occurred, in a manner which reflected great credit on the judgment of the distributress, and afforded high satisfaction to those in whose name and behalf the distribution was made.

What has been stated with respect to the establishment and operations of Foreign Societies, will have prepared the reader for learning, that the pecuniary grants for their encouragement and aid, amounted, in the course of this year, to a very considerable sum. Nor was an inferior degree of generosity shown, in cases where the exercise of it appeared to be called for, toward Societies and charitable Associations within the boundaries of the United Kingdom. Five hundred pounds were presented to the Hibernian Bible Society, whose exertions, under the auspices of His Grace the Lord Primate,* and

* In the course of the years 1809 and 1810, the Hibernian Bible Society very greatly increased its patronage. In the Report for the latter year, His Grace the Lord Primate appears as Patron, the Archbishop of Dublin, President; and, among the Vice-Presidents, are the following Prelates and Dignitaries; viz. His Grace the Lord Archbishop of Tuam, the Bishops of Kildare, Derry, Limerick, Cork, Down, Killalla; and the Provost of Trinity College, &c.

To the 500*l.* contributed by the British and Foreign Bible

other Prelates and personages of distinction, seemed to promise very beneficial consequences.* Two hundred pounds were, for the second time, presented to the Cork Bible Society; and a similar donation was made to the Synod of Ulster, whose efforts in raising contributions for the purpose of distributing the Scriptures among the poor of their congregations had been laudably conspicuous. †

Society were added 50*l.* from the East Lothian, and 300*l.* from the Edinburgh Bible Society.

How strongly the Hibernian Bible Society felt its obligations to the continued friendship of the British and Foreign Bible Society, may be inferred from the following declaration in its "Address to the People of Ireland" in 1810.

"The demands on the Committee for Bibles and Testaments during the last year were so great, that had it not been for the liberality of the British and Foreign Bible Society, they would have been compelled to put a stop to their operations."

* The Belfast Branch, in its Report, observes: "It is a grateful prospect, that the avidity of the people seems to keep pace with the means of gratifying it; and that the demand upon your Committee for the Scriptures, not only continues, but increases."

And the Hibernian Bible Society state, that they are not without positive information, that good has been done: and, by way of confirming this statement, they cite the following communication from one of their Branches.

"The Members are convinced, that the benefits by the circulation of the Scriptures in their vicinity have been considerable, and they ardently hope for an increased extension."

† The Synod, in returning their thanks to the British and Foreign Bible Society for the donation, stated, that "the

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To this exercise of liberality, both at home and abroad, the Society was in a manner impelled, by the ardor with which its cause was espoused, and the generosity with which its treasury was replenished by individuals, congregations, and Associations of various descriptions; but particularly by Auxiliary Societies.

Though recently formed, and very imperfectly organized, these valuable Associations discovered extraordinary vigor; and emulated each other, in fulfilling the engagement implied by their designation, as *Auxiliary* to the Parent Institution. A reference to the Annual Reports will show, that nearly 6,000*l.* were added to its funds by the Contributions derived from those Auxiliary Societies which had been formed within the year; while the degree of influence created in its favor, by their exertions and their printed addresses, baffles every attempt at computation or conjecture.

It would gratify the feelings of the author, to particularize those circumstances of zeal and energy which he had personal opportunities of observing in the early proceedings of the Bristol Society. To those who are acquainted with

demand for the Scriptures" in their part of the kingdom was "increasing;" that they had received from different Congregations the sum of 1102*l.* 8*s.* 3*d.*; and "had distributed 600 4to. Bibles, 130 8vo. 1222 in 12mo. 1423 in 24mo. and 2674 Testaments."

the character of that city, it will not be matter of surprise to learn, that the Society formed within its precincts, speedily took that rank, which, from its wealth, its population, and, above all, from its spirit of religious and benevolent enterprise, it might have been expected to claim in Establishments of so liberal, pious, and benevolent a description.*

Nor would the office be less gratifying, to bring under the notice of the reader the conduct of such other Auxiliary Societies, as, though circumscribed by narrower limits, or comprehending a smaller, and less wealthy population, exhibited, by the promptitude and greatness of their returns, very honorable proofs of liberality and zeal. To this praise the Kendal Society is peculiarly entitled; which, without the recommendation of exalted patronage, or the aid of other subsidiary advantages, effected its establishment with so great rapidity and success, as to be able to present, within three months from the date of its formation, a tribute of more than 330*l.* to the treasury of the Parent Institution.

It has been intimated, and may now be more

* The author has no apprehension of offending those whom he is reluctlantly compelled to pass over in silence, by mentioning the venerable Richard Reynolds, Esq. as one of those individuals to whose liberal, active, and persevering philanthropy, the Auxiliary Bible Society, in that city of which he is so great an ornament and a benefactor, owes its earliest and its latest obligations.

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particularly stated, that not only the exertions of Auxiliary Societies, but also the printed addresses issued and circulated by them in their several districts, contributed materially to promote the interest and extension of the general cause. Many of these addresses would be found, upon examination, to deserve an attentive perusal; as evincing the prevalence of Christian sentiment and Catholic feeling in the vicinities with which they were connected.

Without being suspected of undervaluing the rest, the author trusts he may be permitted to select, as entitled to more than ordinary consideration, the luminous and dignified address of the Leicester Auxiliary Bible Society. The following extracts from that masterly composition, which bears throughout the stamp of the great and liberal mind from which it proceeded,* will be read with pleasure; not only from its intrinsical excellence, but also from the confirmation which it adds to the account already given of the general prosperity of the Parent Institution.

"Notwithstanding the diversity of sentiment which unhappily prevails among Christians, we may fairly presume on the concurrence of all parties and denominations in promoting a design so disinterested as that of diffusing the light of revelation. In the prosecution of this design, our party is the world; the only distinction we

* That of the Rev. Robert Hall, M. A.

contemplate, is between the disciples of revelation and the unhappy victims of superstition and idolatry; and as we propose to circulate the Bible alone, without notes or comments, truth only can be a gainer by the measure. To those who confine their views to this country, the want of Bibles may not appear very urgent; but without insisting on the many thousands, even *here*, who are destitute of them, it is certain that in Pagan, Mahomedan, and Popish countries, they are extremely rare, and their number totally inadequate to supply, not merely the immense population in those parts, but even the increasing demand which a variety of circumstances have combined to produce. To supply this demand, to whatever extent it may be carried, is the aim of the Society in London, with which this is designed to co-operate. Their ambition, as far as it may please God in his providence to smile upon their efforts, is, by imparting the Holy Scriptures, to open the fountain of revelation to all nations. It was natural and necessary for the first movement in so great an enterprize, to commence at the heart of the empire; nor is it less so, that, having commenced there, it should propagate itself through the larger vessels and arteries to the remotest extremities of the body. We have the pleasure of perceiving that the example of the metropolis has already been followed in several of our prin-

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cipal towns and cities; and there is room to hope, that similar institutions will, ere long, be formed in every part of the kingdom."

"In whatever light we consider the British and Foreign Bible Society, it appears to us replete with utility. Its formation will, we trust, constitute a new æra in the history of religion, which may be styled the æra of unanimity. It affords a rallying point for the piety of the age, an unsuspicious medium of communication between the good of all parties and nations, a centre of union and co-operation in the advancement of a common cause, which cannot fail to allay the heats and smooth the asperities of discordant sentiment. By giving the most effectual aid to means already set on foot for the conversion of Pagan nations, it also promises to accelerate the period when truth shall become victorious in the earth."

"It is to be lamented, that Protestant nations have been too long inattentive to this object: we rejoice to find that they are now convinced of their error; and that, touched with commiseration for the unhappy condition of mankind, they are anxious to impart those riches which may be shared without being diminished, and communicated without being lost to the possessor. Such is the felicity of religion; such the unbounded liberality of its principles. Though we should be sorry to administer fuel

to national vanity, we cannot conceal the satisfaction it gives us to reflect, that while the fairest portion of the globe has fallen a prey to that guilty and restless ambition, which, by the inscrutable wisdom of Providence, is permitted for a time to 'take peace from the earth;' this favored country is employed in spreading the triumphs of truth, multiplying the means of instruction, and opening sources of consolation to an afflicted world."

The encouragement given to the British and Foreign Bible Society by such efforts in its support, and such testimonies to its utility, could not fail to produce a considerable effect on the views and the proceedings of those who were appointed to administer its concerns. Regarding the progression of its influence, and the increase of its resources, as a call and a stimulus to more diffusive exertion, they looked around for new scenes in which to display the benevolence of the Institution; and seemed impatient of the restraints which prevented it from being felt and enjoyed by those who inhabited the very extremities of the earth.

It was in this high state of exertion and of hope, and with prospects brightening in so many directions, that the friends of the Society were surprised by the appearance of an opponent to their cause, in the person of the Rev. Dr. Wordsworth, Dean of Bocking, and Domestic Chaplain to his

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Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury. As the publication in which Dr. Wordsworth arraigned the Society, gave occasion to a vexatious and protracted controversy, it will be proper to explain the circumstances in which it originated, and to state such facts respecting it as fall within the period which it is the business of this chapter to record.

In the autumn of 1809, the author, having been induced to enter into a correspondence with some respectable clergymen of Colchester and its vicinity, on the subject of establishing an Auxiliary Bible Society for the county of Essex, found his proposition for such an establishment, after a course of mutual explanation, very warmly and decisively encouraged. The initiatory measures had so far advanced by the month of January, 1810, that a Provisional Committee was regularly formed, consisting wholly of Ministers of the Established Church; the Dissenters having voluntarily left the management of the business in the hands of those by whom they thought the future Society would be introduced with the greatest propriety and the best effect. The Provisional Committee, thus constituted, proceeded to address their clerical brethren, inviting them to attend a preparatory meeting at Colchester on the 19th of the current month, "for the purpose of considering a plan for establishing a Society in aid of the British and Foreign Bible Society."

At the appointed time the meeting took place: between twenty and thirty clergymen attended; and the result was, a unanimous determination to form an Auxiliary Bible Society, and to present an address to the Bishop of London, requesting his Lordship, as Bishop of the Diocese, to become the Patron of the intended Society. An address was accordingly transmitted by the chairman, the Rev. Philip Yorke, Rector of Great Horkesley. To this application the Bishop replied, in terms, respectful indeed, but so decidedly hostile to the principle of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and all its operations, that it was deemed by the applicants imprudent, not to say indecorous, to prosecute any further, for the present, those measures which had so nearly attained the desired maturity. The Bishop's reply was dated January 28, 1810; and early in the month of February the Provisional Committee was formally dissolved.

Shortly subsequent to the event of its dissolution, a letter was received from the Rev. Dr. Wordsworth, one of the parties addressed, agreeably to the Resolution of the 16th of January, containing his refusal to co-operate in the projected Society, and assigning the grounds upon which that refusal was founded. Dr. Wordsworth's Letter was dated, "Lambeth Palace, Jan. 12:" on the 1st of March (as we are told by himself) it "was submitted to the press, in compliance

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with the request of a much respected friend;" and shortly after, appeared before the public, under the title of "Reasons for declining to become a Subscriber to the British and Foreign Bible Society, stated in a Letter to a Clergyman of the Diocese of London, by Christopher Wordsworth, D. D. Dean and Rector of Bocking, and Domestic Chaplain to his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury."

The avowed hostility of the Bishop of London, and the significant superscription of "Lambeth Palace," gave to this Letter of Dr. Wordsworth a sort of adventitious importance, and rendered it an object of some consideration. It was on the ground of the demi-official character which it assumed in the eyes of the world, that, upon receiving a copy of "The Reasons" *from the author*, the Noble President, forgetting every thing but what he owed to the honor and interest of the Institution, so unjustly, and, as to him and others it appeared, so authoritatively assailed, undertook its defence; and in the month of April produced a reply, under the designation of "A Letter to the Reverend Christopher Wordsworth, D. D.* in reply to his Stric-

* Dr. Wordsworth, in replying to this Letter of Lord Teignmouth, uses the following somewhat vaunting expressions:

"When your Lordship is seen to have buckled on your armour, to have left your throne of state, and to have come

tures on the British and Foreign Bible Society, by Lord Teignmouth, President of the British and Foreign Bible Society."

The substance of Dr. Wordsworth's objections to the British and Foreign Bible Society, is thus compendiously expressed by himself:

"While the Bible Society continues such as it now is, embracing for its object the dissemination of the Scriptures, not only abroad, but also *at home*, I am compelled, at the very least, to keep aloof from it. In reply to the solicitations of its friends, my answer must be, 'I am already a Member of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and wish all others to be so likewise; and, therefore, the direct and baneful operation which the Bible Society has to interfere with,

down into the plain, it will be thought that this circumstance denotes something of a more than ordinary alarm in the citadel," &c. *Letter to Lord Teignmouth*, p. 5.

On this piece of misplaced exultation, Mr. Dealtry thus pertinently remarks:

"Do not imagine that his Lordship 'buckled on his armour,' and left his 'throne of state,' because of the *arguments* with which the Society was assailed. No: it was 'Lambeth Palace' which called him to the field. He knew that this hint would be 'tolerably understood' by many 'a country clergyman,' who is far beyond the reach of argument; and, like a wise man, he opposed name to name, and authority to authority. Your '*Reasons* for not subscribing' might safely have been left to a person of my mediocrity of situation and talent: 'Lambeth Palace' demanded rank and dignity.

Dealtry's Vindication, p. 228.

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impede, and curtail the inestimable interests of piety, and peace, and true religion, the preservation and continual promotion of which, are the aim and object of that most important Society, commands me to withhold my hand, that I may not be accessary, by my example, to the injury or the retardation of the still further and further growth and propagation of one of the greatest blessings which the Almighty, in his merciful providence, has vouchsafed to this church and nation.'"

On this passage, Lord Teignmouth, after expressing his regret that such language should have been used in reference to a Society "which was patronized by the late venerable and lamented Bishop of London, whose labors, during a long life, were devoted to the advancement of piety and religious truth, and which continued to be patronized by so many dignitaries of the church, and persons of the first respectability;" observes: "The real ground of your objections appears to be nothing more than this;—that it withdraws from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge funds which would otherwise be appropriated to its support." In reply to the objection, placed in this form, his Lordship thus sensibly argues:

"Objections of a similar nature have occasionally been applied to new charitable Institutions; but I never on this account heard it asserted, that the promoters and supporters of them were liable

to a charge of inhumanity, and want of charity. The public were disposed to give them credit, at least, for pure and benevolent motives; and the patrons of old charities, instead of reprobating the friends of the new, thought it a more rational proceeding to draw the public attention to the old Institutions, and to redouble their exertions in their favor.

"This conduct was laudable; and, if your zeal for the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge had been guided by the same temperate discrimination, you would not have been troubled with this address. Disclaiming any disposition to impeach the justice of your eulogium on that venerable Society whose cause you so warmly espouse; and professing for it the most cordial esteem and respect, I could wish to applaud your zeal for its support, and I should rejoice to learn that any exertions had largely augmented its funds.

"But to return to the objection, the principle of which I shall briefly examine.

"No proof has been exhibited, and I will venture to say, none can be produced, that the annual amount of donations and subscriptions to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, has decreased since the establishment of the Bible Society. If the fact however could be established, still, to justify your inferences, it would be further necessary to show, that the decrease had arisen from

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the transfer of such subscriptions to the last mentioned Institution. It is impossible to determine, and it would be idle to discuss, whether any, and what, addition would have accrued to the funds of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, if the Bible Society had never existed.

"Let us, however, for the sake of argument only, suppose, that some few of the clergy and laity of the Church of England (the Dissenters of the country, and the Presbyterians in Scotland, being out of the question) have contributed to the British and Foreign Bible Society, who, if it had never been established, would have aided the funds of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

"The sum of their contributions, whatever it may be, has been expended in promoting the circulation of the Holy Scriptures; and I do not see how it could have been more beneficially employed by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, or how the interests of 'piety, peace, and true religion,' have been injured by the application of it. The consciences of the subscribers may be fairly at rest on this point.

"This I conceive to be a full and sufficient answer to the principle of your objection. But surely it must be obvious, that the British and Foreign Bible Society, by circulating the Scriptures at reduced prices, *at home*, has a tendency to relieve the funds of the Society for Promoting

Christian Knowledge from a loss on its expenditure, in proportion to the extent of such circulation, and thus a larger portion of its funds becomes applicable to the extension of those other operations which you describe, and denominate, 'interests of incalculable importance.'

"Nor is it going too far, to say, that the institution of the British and Foreign Bible Society has also an indirect tendency to increase the funds of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, in another way, viz. by exciting the attention of the friends of religion, in all parts of the kingdom, to the infinite importance of the Holy Scriptures, and by stimulating their zeal for the propagation of scriptural truth. The feeling thus excited, would naturally take a various direction, and, although the greater portion of its effects might be directed towards the Society whose exertions had given rise to it, some parts would undoubtedly accrue to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

"Now, I am informed, and I believe most correctly, that, in point of fact, the annual amount of subscriptions to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, has considerably increased since the establishment of the Bible Society: if this be the fact,* it affords a strong pre-

* Mr. Dealtry, by a comparison of the average receipts of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge for four years preceding, with those of the five years immediately succeeding, the

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sumption in favour of my argument, and is pretty conclusive against your's.

"Whatever may be thought of this reasoning, I am by no means disposed to concede to you, that the benefit which has resulted to the community from the institution of the British and Foreign Bible Society, would have been equally attained, if every Member of the Church of England who now subscribes to it, had appropriated his contribution to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. The limitations under which that venerable and respectable Society acts, must necessarily have prevented it in numerous instances. Many societies, as well as individuals, who have been supplied with the Scriptures by the British and Foreign Bible Society, could not have received them from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, consistently with its rules and regulations.

"This is a very important consideration, and, of itself a most decisive proof of the utility of that

establishment of the British and Foreign Bible Society, draws this general conclusion.

"Not only have the receipts and subscriptions increased, but the rate of increase has been greatly accelerated since the establishment of the Bible Society; and it should be particularly observed, that the funds and subscriptions of *both Societies* received their greatest augmentation in the same year; viz. in the year ending in March, 1809."

Letter to the Rev. Dr. Wordsworth.

Institution whose operations you arraign. In further elucidation of this argument, I shall take the liberty of adding, for your information, that the original idea of a Bible Society was suggested by the extreme want of Welsh Bibles in North Wales, and the despair of obtaining them, without resorting to new and extraordinary means for that purpose."

The sobriety, good sense, and practical truth, which characterize these remarks, are very striking, and prepare the reader for accompanying the Noble President in drawing the following very just and liberal conclusion:

"With what wisdom or consistency the Bible Society has been produced in hostile opposition to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge,* is, to me, really inconceivable. The two

* The reader will not fail to observe, that the opposition between the two Societies (which his Lordship so justly regrets, and which every candid member of both Societies must equally regret) is wholly to be attributed to the mischievous and persevering hostility of a PARTY in the administration of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. In confirmation of this statement may be produced the declaration of one of the brightest ornaments and steadiest friends of that Society, the late learned and venerable Dr. Vincent, Dean of Westminster, who, in the letter which accompanied his contribution to the British and Foreign Bible Society in December, 1811, thus expresses himself:—"From the time that an attempt was made to make a breach between our Society at Bartlett's Buildings and the Bible Society, I determined to subscribe to the latter, to shew that *I did not belong to that party.*" Surely had the learned Bishop of Chester been aware, from what quarter sprung

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Societies have one object, in common—the diffusion of the Holy Scriptures; and all the operations of the Bible Society are confined to the sole act of distributing the Bible, to the utmost extent that its means will allow. Its proceedings trench on no duty of the Christian ministry; it does not presume to interfere with the discipline of the church, or to recommend any act of preaching, expounding, or prayer; why then, in their march towards their common object, must the two Societies be forced into collision? In the constitution of the Bible Society there is neither rivalry nor competition; but, if there were, the example of St. Paul may relieve any one from the apprehension of impending evils, or baneful consequences, from any competition in the distribution of the Bible. 'Some, indeed,' says the Apostle, 'preach Christ even of envy and strife, and some of good-will. What then? Notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.'"

Shortly after the publication of Lord Teign-

those "comparisons," and that "opposition," between the two Institutions, the existence of which he says is "much to be regretted," his Lordship would surely have abstained from those animadversions, in his Charge to his Clergy, in 1810, which have contributed so greatly to encourage those "comparisons," and to stimulate that "opposition."

mouth's Reply, a spirited and ingenious "Letter, addressed to the Rev. Dr. Wordsworth, by William Dealtry, M. A., Fellow of Trinity College, and Examining Chaplain to the Lord Bishop of Bristol," introduced to the public a writer, to whose promptitude, acuteness, and constancy, in defending and vindicating the cause of the Institution, the friends of the British and Foreign Bible Society are under the greatest obligations. Mr. Dealtry had been a college-associate, and was still the personal friend, of Dr. Wordsworth. He had therefore to balance between private feeling and a sense of public duty. It is not saying too much of Mr. Dealtry, (and more could not be said of any man,) that he sacrificed neither to the other, but so fulfilled the obligations of friendship, as at the same time to satisfy those of affection. "I write not," says Mr. Dealtry, "in the spirit of hostility, and I trust that I shall say nothing which can inflict the slightest pain upon your liberal and manly mind. If I overstep, in a single instance, that precise limit which the most cordial respect and esteem would naturally mark out, I will most readily acknowledge my error, and solicit your forgiveness." This tenderness, so characteristic of a great mind, did not however restrain the writer from examining the objections which it was his business to refute, with just and impartial severity. Few controversial writers have brought to the drudgery

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and trial of replication and rejoinder, more good humour and vivacity than Mr. Dealtry contrives (in despite of an apparent harshness of tone) almost invariably to maintain. After a somewhat elaborate investigation of the question between the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the British and Foreign Bible Society, in which it is shewn, from the improved funds and exertions of the former, how little ground it has of complaint against the latter, Mr. Dealtry enlivens the discussion by an effort of pleasantry, which, as it exhibits a specimen of his manner, and tends, as every thing which he has written does, to recommend a good understanding between the two Societies, the author makes no apology for laying before the reader.

"Once upon a time, in the midst of a parched and dreary land, there gushed from the top of a mountain a fine spring of water, which carried gladness and fertility wherever it flowed: the wilderness was converted into a garden near its banks, and verdure and cultivation were the sure companions of its progress. After some time, a similar stream began to flow from the summit of a neighbouring hill: it became the parent of many branching rivulets, which cheered the face of nature on every side, and carried happiness and abundance into the remotest lands. The good old stream was a little touched with "jealousy;" and, conscious of the inestimable benefits

which itself had conferred, expostulated with its unaspiring neighbour in the following terms:—'Do you not know that you are intruding into a country which I have *pre-occupied*, and that you and your rivulets have a *direct and baneful operation to interfere with, impede, and curtail, the inestimable benefits* of grass and green fields, which I have so happily promoted?'—'Why, how can that be? Are not my streams pure and salubrious as your own; and does not the desert smile, likewise, wherever I go?'—'Your streams do, indeed, profess to be pure, though I have something, if I choose, to say upon that point;—but I insist upon it that I am the good old stream, and that you are an interloper; and I should not err much if I called you a thief.'—'A thief! Did I ever steal any thing from you?'—'Yes, you have: it *can need no proof*, that, if your mouth were closed, some of the water, which now courses along your channels, would, by filtration through the mountain, be found in mine.'—'It is certainly very possible, that some fifteen or twenty drops might have reached you by this subterraneous filtration; but, see what a noble body of water I possess! And I employ the whole for the benefit of these parched and thirsty lands.'—'What business, I ask you, have you to flow at all? I existed for ages before any one thought of you: and I am by no means con-

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vinced, notwithstanding your *imposing and devouring claims*, that you confer any benefit whatever; your very complexion is "offensive;" and if "I should go still deeper, I think it would not be difficult to point out some evils and important deficiencies, and more possibilities of evil, extant in, and resulting from, and probabilities of great improvement lost and precluded by," such a shabby current as you are. Yet, little as I admire you, I had rather that you would become a feeder to me, than move in this unauthorized manner through the world alone.'—'My good friend, it is quite impossible: some of my rivulets might possibly be turned, so as to fall into your channel; but there are copious branches, which, from the nature of the country, roll on in other directions, and cannot by any process be made to combine with yours: neither, as I believe, would you be willing to receive them. While, therefore, we carry cheerfulness and delight on every side, let us be content to pursue our own channels in quietness and peace.'

"It would well become us, my dear Wordsworth, to follow this good advice. Let the rivers of life flow without interruption through all climates, that every one who thirsteth, may come to the waters, and that their benefits may be felt in every corner of the globe, among all nations, and languages, and people, and tongues. Happy

will be the day which shall witness this extension of blessings, and happy the instruments of such abundant good!"

The effect produced by the answers of Lord Teignmouth and Mr. Dealtry, was considerably increased by an eloquent and conciliatory pamphlet from the Rev. W. Ward, Rector of Myland, near Colchester, and one of the earliest and most strenuous of the Society's friends in that quarter. Under the anonymous designation of "An Old Friend to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge," Mr. Ward, in "A Letter on the Subject of the British and Foreign Bible Society, addressed to the Rev. Dr. Gaskin," unfolds the principles upon which he, in common with the Church Members of the British and Foreign Bible Society, reconciles the warm support of that Institution with the sincerest friendship and good will towards the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. As this subject has been, and continues to be, greatly misunderstood, it may not be amiss to show, by a few extracts from Mr. Ward's Letter, the view which was taken of it by the Church Members of the British and Foreign Bible Society, in 1810;—a view of the subject, it must be added, which they entertained from the very commencement of the Institution, and which the experience of every succeeding year has tended more and more to confirm.

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The letter commences as follows:

"Dear Sir,

"You may wonder how an old member and zealous supporter of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, can also be an active and zealous promoter of the British and Foreign Bible Society. I will give you the reason in few words:—Because I consider them, not as rival or opposite Societies, but the very reverse: I consider the new as auxiliary to the old, and both co-operating to promote a more general diffusion of Christian Knowledge."

After pronouncing the highest eulogium on the old Society, Mr. Ward thus resumes:

"You may ask me, perhaps, 'Why then promote a new Society? Why not be content with the old?' I answer, Because the old is, from its constitution, incapable of effecting all the good which is desirable. You are not equal to the work which is before us. The harvest is great, my dear Sir: and the Lord of the harvest seems now to be raising up a great host of laborers to accomplish the grand design. The light of the Gospel, which at present shines but on a speck, as it were, of the globe, is to be diffused over the face of the whole habitable earth, and among those that live upon the wide seas. Now judge, how very inadequate your funds are to the accomplishment of this

great work, drawn, as they are, exclusively, from *Members of the Church of England*. But the unlimited pecuniary resources of the Bible Society—that is to say, the united contributions, the legacies, and donations, of *all descriptions* of Christians—can do wonders; can absolutely supply the place of miracles, and the gift of tongues. Not only "the Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia," but all the dwellers in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, and in the isles of the sea, may be enabled to read in their 'own tongue, wherein they were born, the wonderful works of God.' The object is so glorious, so grand, and so sublime; the scheme is so full of the love of GOD, the love of our country, and the universal love of our fellow-creatures; the idea is so animating, and so consoling; and, at the same time, the attainment of the object so probable, by the means which God seems to have suggested to the minds of men, that, viewed in this light, the work must have the last prayers of every good man when he lies down at night, and his first ejaculations when he awakes in the morning.

"Notwithstanding the great efforts of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, for upwards of a century, our wants at home are still great. I will venture to say, there are few parishes throughout England, in which many Bibles are

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not wanted among the poor; and the wants are much greater in many parts of Scotland: but if you cross the water to the sister kingdom—where the minds of the poor natives, like the soil of their land, will produce a most exuberant crop of any seed you sow, either good or bad—the wants are still far more urgent. Had you visited Ireland before the institution of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the different Societies it has given rise to in that country, you might have travelled from Giant's Causeway to Bantry Bay, from one extremity of the kingdom to the other, and (avoiding the chief towns) visited every cabin in your way, without finding, perhaps, three hundred perfect Bibles among three millions of people. I speak from personal knowledge of the country.

"Now, I only beg any man to take up the Reports of the Bible Society, and read what it has done to supply the poor people of that country with the Bible; let any man see what the Auxiliary Societies of Cork, Dublin, Limerick, Derry, Belfast, and the united efforts of the opulent and populous province of Ulster, have done, and are still doing, towards circulating the Bible throughout the country; and if he have a spark of the love of God, or the love of man, or the love of his country, in his heart, he must approve and rejoice."

The reasoning employed in the following extract, together with the observation by which it is introduced, is deserving attention; and both will be found to apply with increased propriety in the more advanced stages of the controversy.

"The great source of all controversy and contention among good men, with regard to the Bible Society, is a want of a clear knowledge of the subject in dispute. Many oppose it, who have never examined one of its Reports, nor know any thing of its constitution. The fact is, that men catch their prejudices from each other, without giving themselves the trouble to examine the truth and nature of the case. They hear a few alarming phrases—such as amalgamation, heterogeneous mixture, combination of parties—and they immediately infer ruin to the Church, or injury to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. But they would do well to consider, that we are mixed and amalgamated as subjects, soldiers, and sailors, and yet, by means of laws, and discipline, and good government, we are kept in tolerable order, and made to work together for the general good. In like manner, the first law of the Bible Society will preserve unanimity, and make all its members work together for the good of the human race.

"Do not imagine, my dear Sir, that in pleading thus warmly for the Bible Society, I am not also a zealous friend of the Society for Promoting

Christian Knowledge. I would not be understood as advocating the cause solely of a particular body: I desire to plead for the circulation of the Word of God. My prayer is, that both Societies may prosper. You cannot do the same good alone: but the quantum of good that may be done by both Societies conjointly, is absolutely incalculable. Let all contention drop, then; and only emulate each other in doing good. The new Society has greatly contributed to the augmentation of the old, and is contributing daily: which any one may see by comparing your annual subscriptions for the last six years, since the commencement of the Bible Society, with those of the six years immediately preceding. They stand as follows:

"Subscription of 1803, (the year before the Bible Society commenced,) . . 2,119*l.*
"Ditto of 1809 3,413*l.*

"Here is an increase of 1,294*l.*—above one-third; and I predict that your next Report will exhibit a very considerable augmentation to your last.

"Now let us see the number of Bibles, New Testaments, and Psalters, issued by your Society in the same years, and compare one year with the other, and it will plainly appear that the good you have done has increased in the same proportion as your subscriptions.

" Bibles, New Testaments, and Psalters, issued by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in 1803, (the year before the Institution of the Bible Society,)	17,779
" Ditto in 1809	22,611

" Here is an addition of 4,332 ; and if we compare the number of your Bibles, Testaments, and Psalters, issued in 1800, with the number issued in 1809, the difference will be 8,848. In that year you sent out 13,763 ; in this year, 22,611.

" Now to what can this increase of numbers, and this unprecedented exertion be owing, under God, but to the general interest excited in the public mind by this new Society, and the stimulus which the one Society very naturally gives to the other?

" I feel the highest reverence for some that oppose the Bible Society, and confess my inferiority to them in every respect. But surely, my dear Sir, neither you nor they have ever made these calculations. Surely you would not wish to deprive the world of nearly a hundred thousand Bibles and Testaments annually, which may be increased to a million, or to any number commensurate with the funds of the Institution: surely, I say, had you considered the subject in this point of view, you would not, from the dread of some partial evil, wish to deprive the world of

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such an unspeakable blessing, before you secured the means to supply its place. That the world would be deprived of this blessing, will clearly appear, by comparing the sum total of Bibles and Testaments circulated by your Society when you stood alone, in 1800, with the sum total issued by both Societies in 1809.—

"Bibles, Testaments, and Psalters, circulated by the old Society in 1800	13,763
"Bibles, Testaments, and Psalters, circulated by *both* Societies in 1809	99,883!!
More Bibles, Testaments, and Psalters, issued in 1809, than in 1800,	86,120!!

"These are what have issued from the respective repositories in St. Paul's Church-yard and Fleet-street only; but to these if we could add the numbers that have issued from all the other Societies to which the Bible Society has given birth, in Ireland, Scotland, and the continents of Europe and America, the sum total of additional good would be immense. And then, when we consider that all this extensive good is still rapidly extending wider and wider, by means of these two Societies, the mind is filled with

gratitude and wonder; the heart, oppressed with the distressful scenes of war and devastation, is relieved and comforted. Surely it is the God of mercy who is thus sending forth the consolations of the Gospel to the afflicted nations that are suffering at this time under his chastening hand! Where is the man, with a spark of the love of God or man in his heart, that must not pray for the prosperity and welfare of these two Societies?"

The compatibility of the two Societies each with the other having been thus very fairly and satisfactorily explained, the following suggestion is offered to the consideration of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; the wisdom of which will, it may be hoped, recommend it eventually to general adoption.

Let all your members who are also members of the Bible Society, draw their Bibles and Testaments from this, and only Tracts and Prayer Books from yours. Your Bibles and Testaments being your heaviest articles of expense, a saving may hereby be made to you of some thousand pounds annually, and you will be enabled to do much good in other respects: you will be enabled to widen the sphere of your utility, both at home and abroad. Be assured, they will prove your best and truest friends that will adopt this plan. I trust God will put it into the hearts of many good Christians

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to increase your means, by legacies and donations; these, however, are contingent; but the remedy which I propose we can immediately command, and the expediency of it is obvious and important.

"Both Societies, thus proceeding in amicable emulation, might perform such works of love, such wonders of evangelical charity, as have not been known since the days of the Apostles, and would fill the world with astonishment."

As the strain of this letter, though sufficiently liberal, is more particularly adapted to the sentiments and feelings of the Members of the Established Church, it was with great judgment and tenderness of spirit that the writer avowed his respect for the members of other Christian denominations, who are associated in support of the British and Foreign Bible Society. The passage which contains that avowal, exhibits to advantage the principles of the writer; and confirms, by an additional and unsuspected testimony, what has been said in commendation of the Dissenting Members of the Institution.

"I should be very sorry," observes the author, "if any thing in this Letter gave offence to any denomination of Christians. Towards my Dissenting Brethren I feel nothing but sentiments of good-will: the dignity and moderation with which they have hitherto conducted themselves, and the modesty with which they have given the pre-

cedence to the Church in all Auxiliary Societies of which I have received any information, reflect the greatest honor upon the whole body, and prove, to my conviction, that the circulation of the Bible is the chief object they have at heart; which they know they can best promote by giving precedence to the Established Church."

The triumphant defence which the Society had obtained from the exertions of these distinguished advocates, contributed not a little to elevate the spirits of those on whom the toil and the responsibility of conducting its affairs officially devolved. Animated by that issue to which the controversy had been brought, they felt their confidence in the success of their labors abundantly strengthened, while they saw the Society pass, with so much honor, through the ordeal of another controversy, to the joyful celebration of its Sixth Anniversary.

In the midst of an assembly, greatly exceeding, in number and in rank, any attendance that had previously been witnessed; and supported by prelates, peers, and distinguished commoners, and among them by the Bishops of St. David's and of Cloyne, respectively, the first Welsh and Irish Bishops who had countenanced the annual meetings with their presence,—appeared the Noble President, and recounted, in the hearing of an animated multitude, the interesting transactions of the past year. Every eye glistened with plea-

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sure, and every heart beat with exultation, while his Lordship described the extensive and diversified operations in which the Society had been engaged, and pointed out, how, " like the great rivers of the earth, which fertilize regions far distant from the soil in which they take their rise, it had diffused the waters of life to the remotest realms, and had held out an invitation to every accessible part of the globe—' Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!'"

The addresses delivered by the several speakers, were in the same tone of lofty and expanded feeling, subdued indeed, but not lowered, by the painful recollection of the loss which the interest of the Society had sustained by the decease of Bishop Porteus. To the general regret many an eye bore witness, as often as the topic was adverted to, and more particularly when the Rev. Mr. Hughes, with equal sensibility and candor, applied to the dispensation which had removed our Episcopal Patron, the very apposite exclamation: " Our fathers, where are they, and the prophets, do they live for ever?"

The disposition which prevailed throughout the assembly, corresponded with the wishes expressed by the Stockholm Society in their letter of salutation upon the prospect of the approaching anniversary.

" May your annual meeting," say they, anticipating the occasion, " be blessed with much

joyful intelligence from every quarter of the world; announcing, that your exertions do increasingly prosper, that the darkness is passing away, that the glorious light of the Gospel is shining brighter and brighter, and that to the many thousands who reside in the cottages of poverty, and whom God in his inscrutable wisdom feeds with the bread of tears, 'beauty' is now given for ashes, 'the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.' Thus you will have a foretaste of heavenly joys, and we shall participate with you in them. And when at the consideration of all the mercies of God, which far surpass our imagination, you are excited to a holy astonishment, and, lost in wonder, love, and praise, shall draw nigh unto the throne of his glory, there to present, with one heart and voice, your united thanks and adorations,—our Amen shall resound, and mingle with that of the whole creation."

The event of this meeting, was, the addition of two Irish Prelates, the Bishops of Cloyne, and of Clogher, to the number of the Vice-Presidents; and a large accession, by new subscriptions and donations, to the general strength of the Institution.

Such was the auspicious termination of a year signally distinguished by the several vicissitudes of conflict and prosperity, of disappointment and

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success. The spirit in which its proceedings were commemorated, was congenial with the sacred and peaceful character of the Institution. No symptoms were manifested either of angry irritation or of indecorous triumph. Every consideration in the remotest degree allied to contention and controversy, was kept out of view; and nothing was advanced, nothing was contemplated, but the glorious design of the Society, and the unexceptionable means of effecting its accomplishment.

"We could have wished," to quote the language of a respectable publication,* "that every individual who feels a doubt respecting the real nature and tendency of the British and Foreign Bible Society, had been present at the meeting which we have now the happiness to record. He would have seen a large assembly, composed of Christians of almost every name, rejoicing together in the progressive advancement of the Society towards its grand object, the extension of the word of life and salvation 'to all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues.' He would have seen how the unity and sublimity of their common object had put to flight every discordant feeling, and blended them into one harmonious mass; affording some idea, though a faint one,

* Christian Observer for May, 1810.

of the peace, and love, and joy, we are taught to expect in that glorious period which animates the hopes of the saints, when

> "One song employs all nations, and all cry,
> 'Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us.'
> The dwellers in the vale, and in the rocks
> Shout to each other, and the mountain-tops,
> From distant mountains catch the flying joy:
> Till nation after nation taught the strain,
> Earth rolls the rapturous Hosanna round."

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